

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE
PERFORMANCE AT A NORTHWEST-BASED MANUFACTURING COMPANY**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Relationship between employee engagement and employee performance at a Northwest-based manufacturing company

by

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This study examines the intricate relationship between employee engagement and performance within a manufacturing company in the Northwest region. In recent years, employee engagement has emerged as a crucial determinant of organisational success, significantly impacting job satisfaction, commitment to the company, and overall performance. To investigate this dynamic, a quantitative research methodology was employed, utilising validated survey instruments such as the Gallup Q12® Workplace Audit to measure employee engagement and the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) to evaluate performance levels.

The research findings reveal a notable positive correlation between employee engagement and overall work performance. Employees who are actively engaged in their work exhibited enhanced task performance, completing their specific duties with greater efficiency and effectiveness, and improved contextual performance, encompassing their contributions to workplace culture and collaborative efforts. These results align with existing literature, which suggests that engaged employees tend to display higher levels of enthusiasm and commitment to their roles.

Conversely, the study found no significant connection between employee engagement and counterproductive work behaviour, indicating that the factors influencing negative workplace behaviours may differ and require further exploration. The insights from this study highlight the critical need for organizations to foster employee engagement to enhance productivity and achieve favourable organizational outcomes. To this end, the research advocates implementing targeted engagement strategies, such as recognition and reward programs, leadership development opportunities, and supportive workplace initiatives, to drive performance improvements. Overall, these findings contribute valuable knowledge to the field of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (IOP) and offer practical recommendations to enhance employee engagement, particularly in the manufacturing sector.

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CHAPTER 1 SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

This dissertation focused on the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance at a Northwest province based manufacturing company in South Africa, to explore how levels of employee engagement influence individual job performance, identifying key factors that drive engagement in a manufacturing context, and providing practical recommendations to enhance both engagement and performance within the organisation Chapter 1 contains the background and motivation, the problem statement, the aims, paradigm perspective, research design and method, as well as the chapter layout.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Manufacturing remains one of the most significant pillars of economic development, as it facilitates the transformation of raw materials into finished products with substantially higher economic value. Through this value-creation process, manufacturing organisations contribute directly to employment generation, industrial development, productivity improvement, and national economic growth (Kenton, 2022). In South Africa, the manufacturing sector has historically played a central role in the economy, contributing approximately 13% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018 and employing an estimated 1,179,021 individuals in the formal sector (Brink & Kreuser, 2021; South Africa's Manufacturing Industry, 2018). Within the Northwest Province, manufacturing firms are particularly important due to their contribution to local employment opportunities, skills development, and regional economic stability (Provincial Review 2024: Northwest, 2024). The manufacturing company under investigation reflects these broader national and provincial trends, as it constitutes a significant employer and plays a meaningful role in sustaining local economic activity.

Despite its economic importance, the South African manufacturing sector continues to face substantial challenges. These include declining labour productivity, rising operational costs, skills shortages, increased global competition, and persistent inefficiencies in production processes (Zondo, 2020). In such a demanding environment, the success and sustainability of manufacturing organisations are increasingly dependent on the effective utilisation of human capital. To remain productive and competitive, manufacturing organisations require employees who are not only skilled but also psychologically invested, motivated, and committed to their work (Singh & Tensay, 2020). Consequently, employee engagement has become a strategic priority for organisations seeking to enhance performance, improve quality outputs, and achieve long-term sustainability.

Employee engagement is widely recognised as a multidimensional construct that reflects the extent to which employees are emotionally, cognitively, and physically involved in their work roles. The concept was first introduced by Kahn (1990), who described engagement as the harnessing of employees' selves to their work, whereby individuals express themselves fully during role performance. Building on this foundation, subsequent scholars have conceptualised engagement as a state of enthusiasm, absorption, and dedication that motivates employees to invest discretionary effort in their tasks (Sekhar et al., 2018; Abdulrahman et al., 2022). Sudibjo and Sutarji (2020) further define employee engagement as the alignment between employees' personal identities and their job roles, enabling them to perform their work with heightened energy and purpose. This active psychological presence distinguishes employee engagement from related constructs such as job satisfaction or organisational commitment, which are often more passive in nature.

The importance of employee engagement lies in its strong association with positive organisational outcomes. Engaged employees consistently demonstrate higher levels of productivity, quality performance, innovation, and organisational commitment, while also exhibiting lower levels of absenteeism and turnover intentions (Hewitt, 2015; Yadav et al., 2022). In contrast, disengaged employees tend to withdraw from their roles, exert minimal effort, resist change, and display reduced concern for organisational objectives (Kahn, 1990; Wan et al., 2018). In manufacturing environments, where precision, efficiency, teamwork, and adherence to safety standards are essential, employee disengagement can have particularly severe consequences. These may include production delays, increased defects and errors, compromised safety, interpersonal conflict, and financial losses, all of which negatively affect organisational performance and competitiveness (Zondo, 2020; Jengwa & Chisoro, 2023).

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model offers a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding how workplace characteristics influence employee engagement and performance (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). According to the model, job demands, such as workload, time pressure, physical strain, and emotional stress, can lead to exhaustion and disengagement when they are excessive or poorly managed. Conversely, job resources, such as supervisory support, autonomy, feedback, training opportunities, and a supportive organisational climate, play a crucial motivational role by fostering engagement and enhancing performance. The JD-R model is particularly relevant to manufacturing contexts, where employees often face high physical and cognitive demands but may have limited access to sufficient resources. Applying this framework enables a nuanced examination

of how job demands and resources interact to influence employee engagement and, in turn, job performance.

Empirical research has consistently demonstrated a strong relationship between employee engagement and performance-related outcomes. Studies indicate that increased engagement is associated with improved individual performance, higher organisational productivity, reduced turnover intentions, and enhanced financial performance (Goestjahjanti et al., 2020; Othman & Mahmood, 2022). Hewitt (2015) reports that even a 5% increase in employee engagement can result in a 3% increase in revenue growth, while organisations with highly engaged workforces achieve significantly higher total shareholder returns than their less engaged counterparts. These findings highlight the strategic value of employee engagement, particularly in performance-driven sectors such as manufacturing.

Notwithstanding the growing international evidence base, there remains a notable lack of context-specific research examining the engagement–performance relationship within South African manufacturing organisations, especially those located in the Northwest Province. Existing studies have produced inconsistent findings regarding the mechanisms through which engagement influences job performance, with some research suggesting that the relationship remains unclear in manufacturing settings (Sun, 2016). Moreover, much of the existing literature fails to account for regional socio-economic conditions, organisational cultures, and industry-specific challenges that may shape employee experiences and performance outcomes. This gap in the literature limits the ability of practitioners and policymakers to design evidence-based interventions tailored to the unique realities of manufacturing organisations in this region.

From a practical perspective, low levels of employee engagement in Northwest-based manufacturing companies have been associated with a range of adverse outcomes, including declining productivity, increased absenteeism and turnover, reduced morale, and compromised quality standards (Chinyamurindi & Mashavira, 2024; Zondo, 2020). Disengaged employees may display behaviours such as lack of enthusiasm, minimal effort, frequent distractions, resistance to teamwork, and withdrawal from problem-solving activities (Wan et al., 2018). These behaviours not only undermine individual performance but also disrupt team functioning and overall organisational effectiveness. In extreme cases, disengagement has resulted in costly operational disruptions, such as production stoppages and avoidable financial losses, highlighting the tangible impact of engagement on organisational sustainability.

Against this backdrop, the motivation for the present study is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the study seeks to contribute to the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between employee engagement and performance within a South African manufacturing context, using the JD-R model as a guiding framework. Practically, the study aims to generate contextually relevant insights that can inform managerial practices and human resource strategies aimed at enhancing employee engagement and improving performance outcomes. By focusing on a manufacturing company based in the Northwest Province, the study provides an in-depth and context-sensitive understanding of engagement dynamics that broader studies may overlook. Ultimately, the findings are expected to inform strategies that support the development of an engaged, motivated, and high-performing workforce, thereby strengthening organisational effectiveness and contributing to the sustainability of the manufacturing sector.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Statistics South Africa (2024) reports that South Africa has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world, and any job loss compounds that rate. As a result, organisations should strive to have engaged employees if they are to stay afloat, remain productive, and contribute positively to the country's economy and unemployment alleviation. It appears that, in the manufacturing company under study, employees are disengaged from their work due to alleged performance-related behaviours, such as a lack of enthusiasm, frequent distractions, and minimal effort in their tasks. If this is somewhat true, the company might in the long run experience irreversible difficulties. It is for these reasons that the current study was conceptualised. Numerous studies support the notion that employee engagement plays a significant role in enhancing employee performance (Heyns, McCallaghan, & Beukes, 2021; Mukwakungu, Mankazana, & Mbohwa, 2018). Studies have shown a positive impact on an organisation's revenue growth (Nazir & Islam, 2020). Engaged employees are more likely to take initiative, show commitment to organisational goals, and exert discretionary effort, behaviours that are directly linked to improved job performance (Saks, Gruman, & Zhang, 2022). On the contrary, employee disengagement has been consistently associated with adverse performance outcomes. According to Shinde (2025), disengaged employees may be physically at work. However, they often feel emotionally disconnected, lack enthusiasm, and are not fully committed to their tasks, a condition usually referred to as presenteeism. Disengaged employees frequently exhibit absenteeism, low motivation, and a lack of accountability, all of which hinder organisational performance (Shinde, 2025). Kahn (1990) notes that disengaged individuals tend to

withdraw their cognitive, emotional, and physical efforts, resulting in reduced productivity and a disconnect from their work roles. When disengagement becomes widespread, it can significantly undermine a company's capacity to meet its objectives (Afrahi et al., 2022). Disengagement manifests as reduced discretionary effort and increased counterproductive behaviours, which are core concerns of IOP and affect organisational effectiveness.

Employee engagement is the backbone of most successful organisations. Low employee engagement or disengagement leads to several undesirable outcomes, such as poor employee performance and diminished organisational effectiveness, financial implications such as retrenchments or business closures, increased turnover, and difficulty sustaining a committed workforce (Gallup, 2017; Hewitt, 2015). Employee engagement is widely recognised as a fundamental driver of organisational success globally. In today's competitive and challenging business environment, managers are striving to improve performance (Wan et al., 2018). Moreover, these companies are often led by CEOs who understand that employee engagement is not just a "there" but a critical factor in achieving business results (Tensay & Singh, 2020). In the Northwest province of South Africa, unique cultural and labour dynamics further complicate engagement issues. For example, high unemployment can lead to job insecurity, which can adversely affect employee morale and engagement. Coupled with cultural factors such as collectivism, which emphasises group cohesion over individual performance, these influences can significantly shape employee attitudes. Understanding these nuances is critical as they can have a profound impact on organisational effectiveness.

Furthermore, although global research, such as Gallup (2017), indicates that only 15% of employees are actively engaged, leaving the majority disengaged or actively disengaged, there is a noticeable lack of empirical research on how this trend manifests in South African manufacturing settings, particularly in provinces such as the Northwest. This gap is especially problematic given the sector's contribution to economic growth and its need for sustained operational efficiency. Therefore, a more context-specific understanding of how employee engagement influences performance outcomes is critical. By addressing this gap, the current study aims to explore the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance in a Northwest-based manufacturing company, to inform targeted interventions to improve workforce productivity and organisational sustainability.

While the ideal scenario is one in which employees are fully engaged in their work and consistently achieve high performance, this is not the reality currently observed in the manufacturing organisation

under study. Observable behaviours such as reduced motivation, diminished focus, and low enthusiasm suggest that employees may be physically present but mentally disengaged, which poses a serious concern for an industry that depends heavily on a productive and committed workforce (Zondo, 2025). Therefore, a more context-specific understanding of how employee engagement influences performance outcomes is critical. By addressing this gap, the current study aims to explore the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance in a Northwest-based manufacturing company, to inform targeted interventions to improve workforce productivity and organisational sustainability.

To address the above issues, this research was designed to answer the following literature and empirical questions:

Research questions regarding the literature review:

- How is employee engagement conceptualised in the literature?
- How is employee performance conceptualised in the literature?
- What recommendations and conclusions can be made about the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance based on the literature reviews?

Research questions concerning the empirical study:

- What is the relationship between employee engagement (independent variable) and employee performance (dependent variable) in the manufacturing sector?
- What is the predictive relationship between these two variables? Does high engagement predict high employee performance or vice versa?
- Based on the findings, what recommendations and contributions can be made to the IOP sector and literature in general?

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The general aim of this research was to comprehensively investigate the intricate relationship between employee engagement and employee performance within the manufacturing sector at a Northwest-based company.

The specific aims relating to the literature review were:

- To conceptualise employee engagement
- To conceptualise employee performance

Through a literature review, the existing relationship between employee engagement and employee performance is determined, in general and specifically within the manufacturing sector.

The specific aims relating to the empirical study were:

- To determine the strength and direction of the relationship between employee engagement (independent variable) and employee performance (dependent variable) within the manufacturing sector.
- To establish the predictive nature of the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance, providing insights into how changes in engagement levels affect performance outcomes.

Based on the research findings, formulate practical recommendations for IOP and the manufacturing sector to enhance employee engagement and performance. Additionally, to contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence and insights into the interplay between employee engagement and performance in the manufacturing sector. Having articulated the research problem and its significance, the following section outlines the paradigm perspective underpinning the study. This includes the philosophical assumptions guiding the research approach, methodology, and interpretation of findings.

1.4 THE PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

This study is grounded in a positivist research paradigm, which assumes that social phenomena such as employee engagement and performance exist as objective, measurable constructs that can be examined through empirical observation and statistical analysis. From an ontological perspective, the study adopts a realist stance, positing that engagement and performance are real phenomena that manifest in observable workplace behaviours. Positivism emphasises objectivity, empirical observation, and the use of systematic methods to explore, confirm, or predict patterns of behaviour. It assumes that reality exists independently of human perception and can be discovered through precise measurement and observation (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). In line with this approach, the study prioritises the validity, reliability, and replicability of findings, as emphasised by (Oates et al.,

2004). By rigorously testing and verifying hypotheses and theories, positivist research aims to generate generalisable facts and laws that contribute to a scientifically grounded understanding of human behaviour.

Within this framework, the theoretical paradigm underpinning this research aligns with the belief that employees strive toward happiness and fulfilment at work through satisfaction, high performance, and engagement (Chance, 2008). The positivist approach is particularly relevant to this study, as it supports the systematic and empirical investigation of the relationship between employee engagement and performance (Maksimović & Evtimov, 2023).

The goal is not only to observe engagement levels but also to quantify their effect on job performance outcomes in a measurable and replicable way. The study aligns with positivism by emphasising quantitative measurement, hypothesis testing, and the identification of relationships between variables. Knowledge is generated through the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data, enabling the testing of theoretically derived propositions in a controlled and replicable manner. Furthermore, this paradigm supports the use of structured methodologies and statistical analysis to investigate how variations in employee engagement affect key performance indicators, such as productivity, efficiency, and quality, particularly in the manufacturing sector. This is critical in industries that rely heavily on operational precision and consistent outputs. As Jayasuriya (2023) notes, engaged and satisfied employees are more likely to perform well and derive enjoyment from their work, thereby contributing to both individual and organisational success. Therefore, by adhering to the principles of positivism, this study seeks to uncover concrete, empirical evidence about how employee engagement impacts performance. This approach enables a clear, evidence-based understanding of workforce dynamics, positioning the findings to inform practical, data-driven interventions in manufacturing organisations.

This paradigm is reflected in the use of standardised measurement instruments, including the Gallup Q12, to assess employee engagement and validated performance measures to capture task, contextual, and counterproductive behaviours. The selection of these instruments supports the positivist emphasis on reliability, validity, and objectivity in measurement. Furthermore, the quantitative, cross-sectional research design and the application of statistical techniques such as correlation and regression analysis are consistent with a positivist approach. These methods enable the examination of the strength, direction, and predictive nature of relationships between employee engagement and performance

variables. Statistical significance and effect sizes are used to conclude, reinforcing the study's commitment to empirical verification rather than subjective interpretation. By aligning the research objectives, measurement choices, and analytical strategies with a positivist paradigm, the study ensures methodological coherence. It enhances the credibility and generalisability of its findings within the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

The increasing complexity of the global economic environment has led to renewed emphasis on employee engagement as a strategic driver of employee performance and organisational success. In South Africa's Northwest province, the manufacturing sector, marked by skill shortages, labour unrest, and economic volatility, faces significant challenges that necessitate optimising workforce performance through employee engagement strategies (Naidoo & Werner, 2022). Employee engagement is a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, emotional, and physical investment in one's work (Kahn, 1990; Byrne, 2022; Sudibjo & Sutarji, 2020). When employees are engaged, they exhibit higher productivity, greater innovation, and improved work quality (Schaufeli et al., 2002). While the literature is rich in examining these relationships in knowledge-based industries and developed economies, research on employee engagement within the South African manufacturing context remains sparse, creating a critical gap in localised, sector-specific knowledge (Zondo, 2020; Naidoo & Werner, 2022). According to recent studies, integrating employee engagement practices in the South African manufacturing industry has shown promising results, particularly in enhancing productivity and quality standards. For instance, Smith and Mtshali (2023) found that targeted engagement interventions increased output efficiency by 15%, demonstrating the potential benefits of addressing this gap. Similarly, research by Khumalo (2023) highlights the correlation between strong employee engagement frameworks and reduced error rates in manufacturing processes.

To ensure academic rigour and relevance, the literature review included peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and reputable reports. Seminal works and classical theories foundational to the constructs of employee engagement and performance (e.g., Kahn, 1990) were retained irrespective of age due to their theoretical importance. Preference was given to empirical studies, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses within the fields of industrial psychology, organisational behaviour, and human resource management. Studies were included if they explored engagement and

performance either independently or as related constructs, with a focus on the manufacturing, industrial, or related sectors. Excluded from the review were non-academic sources, non-English publications, and literature lacking methodological transparency or relevance to the South African or emerging market context. This literature review critically synthesises academic work on employee engagement and employee performance, reviewing definitions, theoretical models, antecedents, outcomes, and empirical findings. It evaluates how engagement influences performance, with a particular focus on the South African manufacturing sector, and concludes by establishing the theoretical foundation, research rationale, and significance of this study.

1.5.1 Conceptualising Employee Engagement

1.5.1.1 Definitions and Theoretical Perspectives

Despite its prominence in organisational research and practice, employee engagement remains a concept marked by definitional ambiguity (Byrne, 2022). According to Kahn's (1990) foundational conceptualisation of engagement, it is the physical, cognitive, and emotional expression of the self in work roles. Kahn's model, often cited as the origin of modern engagement theory, positions psychological safety, meaningfulness, and availability as necessary conditions for engagement. Building on Kahn's work, Saks (2006) introduces a dual construct: employee engagement (engagement with one's role) and organisational engagement (engagement with the organisation), proposing that each has distinct antecedents and outcomes. Other researchers argue that engagement reflects both a state of mind and a behavioural orientation. For example, Macey and Schneider (2008) propose a comprehensive engagement framework that distinguishes between trait engagement (personal disposition), state engagement (momentary experience), and behavioural engagement (observable action).

While widely adopted, engagement as a construct has been critiqued for overlapping with related constructs such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and job involvement (Christian et al., 2011). Nevertheless, empirical evidence has largely supported the construct validity of employee engagement as a unique and multidimensional predictor of work outcomes (Saks, 2006). Kahn's (1990) model of psychological presence laid the groundwork for the engagement literature, while the JD-R model (Job Demands-Resources) remains the dominant framework for understanding the antecedents and consequences of engagement. SET (Social Exchange Theory) (Blau, 1964) complements this by explaining the motivational basis of engagement through reciprocal social

exchange. Employee engagement is broadly defined in two main ways: as a multi-faceted construct and as a positive state of mind. Many scholars (e.g., Kahn, 1990; May et al., 2004; Saks, 2006; Sudibjo & Sutarji, 2020) describe it as involving physical, cognitive, and emotional involvement in work, reflecting commitment, loyalty, and active participation. Others (e.g., Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) emphasise engagement as a positive psychological state characterised by energy, dedication, and absorption. Additionally, some definitions focus on employees' willingness and dedication to stay and striving for organisational success (e.g., Hewitt, 2015). Overall, employee engagement encompasses an employee's full investment, physically, mentally, and emotionally, in their work roles and organisational goals (Sekhar et al., 2018).

1.5.1.2 Dimensions of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement consists of three key dimensions, vigour (energy and resilience), dedication (enthusiasm and pride), and absorption (deep focus on tasks), as defined by Schaufeli et al. (2002). These dimensions, based on the JD-R model, have been validated across various sectors but are less studied in manufacturing, especially in developing countries (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

1.5.1.3 Antecedents of Employee Engagement (Factors leading to employee engagement)

According to Kaaviyapriya and Xavier (2020), many factors at various levels, such as organisational, team, and individual, lead to employee engagement. Factors that promote positive or high engagement levels include job resources such as autonomy and social support, transformational leadership, positive organisational culture (Ashley & Brijball Parumasur, 2024), and climate (Saks, 2006; Zhu et al., 2013), psychological safety and meaningfulness (Kahn, 1990), and personal resources like optimism and resilience. Most research on these antecedents comes from Western contexts, indicating a need for localised studies in emerging economies like South Africa.

Clear organisational policies, fair treatment, and supportive work conditions play an important role in fostering employee engagement (Dajani, 2015). When a company has transparent policies regarding fair pay, hiring, safety, and work flexibility, employees feel secure and valued (Dajani, 2015; Ozelik, 2015). This sense of organisational support strengthens employees' emotional connection to the workplace and enhances engagement (Chandani et al., 2016). However, when organisational politics and favouritism are perceived to influence decision-making, employees feel

discouraged and may reduce their discretionary effort (Mathur et al., 2013). In such situations, engagement levels decline because employees interpret unfairness as a lack of respect or support (Karatepe, 2013). Fair and transparent reward systems further reinforce engagement, as employees feel recognised and appreciated when pay and benefits are equitable and clearly communicated (Saks, 2006; Dajani, 2015; Stephanie & Gustomo, 2015). Additionally, opportunities for training, career advancement, and professional growth increase employees' sense of future investment in the organisation and encourage ongoing commitment (Chandani et al., 2016; Salunkhe et al., 2024; Shantz et al., 2016).

Individual psychological attributes significantly shape how employees experience and express engagement (Chen, 2016; Kwon & Kim, 2019). Mindset influences how employees interpret challenges and opportunities; those with a growth mindset are more likely to persist through difficulties and view work as meaningful and achievable (Keating & Heslin, 2015). High self-efficacy also contributes to greater engagement, as confidence in one's abilities encourages persistence, creativity, and proactive effort (Chen, 2016; Kwon & Kim, 2019). Employees with higher self-efficacy also manage pressures and work–life demands more effectively (Chan et al., 2017). Personality traits such as conscientiousness, extraversion, and honesty–humility are linked to greater engagement because they influence positive work attitudes and sustained effort (Chandani et al., 2016). These personal characteristics determine how readily and deeply individuals invest themselves in their roles.

Workplace relationships influence how safe and supported employees feel. Trusting, respectful, and cooperative team environments create psychological safety, allowing employees to speak up, share ideas, and ask for help without fear of negative consequences (Kahn, 1990; Kwon & Kim, 2019). Engagement is often contagious; when team members demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment, others are likely to mirror this energy, resulting in stronger collective performance (Wigston, 2019). Leadership also plays a crucial role. Supportive leaders who act with clarity, authenticity, and care encourage trust, motivation, and commitment among employees (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Daily interactions with line managers strongly influence engagement because they determine the level of guidance, recognition, and support employees receive (Stephanie & Gustomo, 2015).

The characteristics of the job itself shape how meaningful and engaging the work feels. Work that is varied, purposeful, and allows the use of multiple skills creates psychological meaning and supports

higher engagement (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006). Autonomy and task significance further contribute to engagement by increasing employees' sense of ownership and importance in the organisation (Kwon & Kim, 2019). Empowerment, where employees are trusted to make decisions and improve work processes, enhances motivation and involvement (Chandani et al., 2016). Psychological safety within the job context also encourages learning and initiative, further strengthening engagement (Kahn, 1990). Recognition and constructive feedback affirm employees' contributions and reinforce their sense of being valued (Saks, 2006; Stephanie & Gustomo, 2015). Additionally, supportive work–life balance policies reduce stress and improve sustained engagement (Chandani et al., 2016). In contrast, job insecurity discourages emotional investment and decreases engagement, as employees prioritise self-protection over performance.

1.5.1.4 Outcomes of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a construct that has gained widespread acceptance; however, it has faced critiques regarding its overlap with closely related constructs such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement (Christian et al., 2011). Despite this critique, empirical evidence has largely corroborated the construct validity of employee engagement as a unique and multidimensional predictor of work outcomes (Saks, 2006). The theoretical foundation for employee engagement literature is primarily rooted in Kahn's (1990) model of psychological presence. This model provides a framework for understanding the depth and complexity of employee engagement. In addition, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model serves as the prevailing framework for investigating the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. Furthermore, Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) enhances the understanding of engagement by illustrating its motivational basis through reciprocal social exchanges between employees and their organizations.

Employee engagement is frequently defined in two principal ways: as a multi-faceted construct and as a positive psychological state. Scholars such as Kahn (1990), May et al. (2004), Saks (2006), and Sudibjo and Sutarji (2020) characterize engagement as involving the physical, cognitive, and emotional involvement of individuals in their work. This perspective highlights aspects of commitment, loyalty, and active participation. Conversely, other researchers (e.g., Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) emphasize engagement as a positive psychological state marked by energy, dedication, and absorption. Further definitions underscore the employees' willingness to contribute towards organizational success (Hewitt, 2015). Overall, employee engagement is understood as an employee's

comprehensive investment, physically, mentally, and emotionally, in their work roles and in the pursuit of organizational goals (Sekhar et al., 2018).

The dimensions of employee engagement consist of three key components: vigour (energy and resilience), dedication (enthusiasm and pride), and absorption (deep concentration on tasks), as delineated by Schaufeli et al. (2002). These dimensions, informed by the JD-R model, have been validated across diverse sectors; however, they remain less explored within the manufacturing sector, particularly in developing countries (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The antecedents of employee engagement encompass various factors at multiple levels, including organizational, team, and individual influences. As articulated by Kaaviyapriya and Xavier (2020), factors that foster high levels of employee engagement include job resources such as autonomy and social support, alongside transformational leadership, positive organizational culture (Ashley & Brijball Parumasur, 2024), and a conducive work climate (Saks, 2006; Zhu et al., 2013). Furthermore, elements such as psychological safety and a sense of meaningfulness (Kahn, 1990), coupled with personal resources like optimism and resilience, play critical roles in promoting engagement. A considerable portion of the research on these antecedents has emerged from Western contexts, indicating a pressing need for localized studies in emerging economies, such as South Africa.

Clear organizational policies, equitable treatment, and supportive working conditions are paramount in cultivating employee engagement. When organizations maintain transparency concerning policies related to fair compensation, hiring practices, safety, and work flexibility, employees experience a sense of security and value (Dajani, 2015; Ozcelik, 2015). This perception of organizational support significantly enhances employees' emotional connection to the workplace and sustains engagement (Chandani et al., 2016). Conversely, when employees perceive decision-making processes to be influenced by organizational politics and favoritism, it can lead to feelings of discouragement, ultimately diminishing discretionary effort (Mathur et al., 2013). In such scenarios, employees may experience a decline in engagement, as they interpret perceived unfairness as indicative of a lack of respect or support (Karatepe, 2013).

A transparent and equitable reward system further fortifies engagement; employees feel recognized and valued when compensation and benefits are equitable and clearly communicated (Saks, 2006; Dajani, 2015; Stephanie & Gustomo, 2015). Additionally, opportunities for training, career advancement, and professional growth amplify employees' sense of future investment in the

organization, thus fostering ongoing commitment (Chandani et al., 2016; Salunkhe et al., 2024; Shantz et al., 2016).

Individual psychological attributes are instrumental in shaping employee engagement experiences. Mindset plays a crucial role in how employees perceive challenges and opportunities; those possessing a growth mindset tend to navigate difficulties more effectively, perceiving their work as meaningful and attainable (Keating & Heslin, 2015). Likewise, high self-efficacy contributes to greater engagement, as confidence in one's abilities can promote persistence, creativity, and proactive effort (Chen, 2016; Kwon & Kim, 2019). Employees with elevated self-efficacy are also better equipped to manage pressures and balance work–life demands (Chan et al., 2017). Personality traits such as conscientiousness, extraversion, and honesty–humility have been associated with higher engagement levels, as they contribute to positive work attitudes and sustained effort (Chandani et al., 2016). These personal characteristics fundamentally influence the extent to which individuals invest themselves in their roles.

Finally, the quality of workplace relationships is pivotal in determining the degree to which employees feel safe and supported. Environments characterized by trust, respect, and cooperation enhance psychological safety, which in turn fosters employee engagement. Creating and maintaining such a workplace culture is essential for optimizing engagement across diverse organizational contexts.

1.5.2 Conceptualisation of Employee Performance

1.5.2.1 Definitions and Theoretical Perspectives

Employee performance is a critical determinant of organisational success and is broadly defined as the effectiveness with which job incumbents execute their responsibilities (Campbell et al., 1990). According to Campbell's performance taxonomy, employee performance comprises task performance (core job responsibilities), contextual performance (supportive behaviours not directly linked to core tasks), and counterproductive work behaviour (actions detrimental to the organisation) (Campbell et al., 1990). Aguinis (2009) emphasises that performance should be seen as behaviour rather than outcomes, highlighting that these actions are observable, measurable, and within the employee's control. This behavioural approach is crucial in contexts such as manufacturing, where external

factors, such as equipment breakdowns or supply chain delays, can affect outcomes regardless of employee effort.

Employee performance is a critical focus for organisations, encompassing behaviours and outcomes that contribute to organisational success. It involves meeting job tasks within expected standards and timeframes and influences decisions related to rewards, promotions, and career development. Performance reflects employees' behaviours and contributions toward organisational goals. Factors such as work environment, leadership, training, and engagement influence employee performance, as supportive environments and effective leadership enhance motivation and satisfaction, while adequate training and engagement foster the skills and dedication required for high productivity. Performance categories include core task performance, citizenship behaviours, and counterproductive behaviours, all of which impact organisational outcomes such as innovation and client satisfaction (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015).

1.5.2.2 Dimensions of Employee Performance

Employee performance is a multifaceted construct that typically comprises three core dimensions: task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) (Koopmans et al., 2014a). Task performance refers to the execution of duties and responsibilities that are formally outlined in an employee's job description. It encompasses the technical and operational aspects of the role and is directly linked to achieving organisational goals. In contrast, contextual performance includes voluntary behaviours that go beyond formal job requirements and contribute to the broader organisational environment. These behaviours, such as helping colleagues or showing initiative, support team functioning and organisational culture (Ashley & Brijball Parumasur, 2024; Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Govender & Bussin, 2020). The third dimension, CWB, involves intentional actions that harm the organisation or its members. These behaviours can include absenteeism, sabotage, interpersonal conflict, or lack of cooperation, and they undermine overall productivity and morale (Spector & Fox, 2005). In manufacturing, these three dimensions are particularly significant. Manufacturing environments often depend heavily on accuracy, safety, and teamwork to meet production targets and maintain operational efficiency. High task performance ensures that production standards are met, while strong contextual performance supports collaboration and a favourable work climate. Conversely, the presence of counterproductive behaviours can disrupt workflow, compromise safety protocols, and diminish output quality.

Understanding and managing these dimensions is therefore essential for sustaining high performance within manufacturing organisations (Habib, Alvi, & Nemati, 2022).

In particular, the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) is a widely used tool for assessing employee performance by evaluating three core components: task performance, contextual performance, and CWB. This tool has been validated across diverse cultural contexts, supporting its broad applicability. Despite potential biases inherent in self-reported data, such as social desirability or inaccurate self-assessment, the IWPQ outweighs these concerns by providing a structured, comprehensive measure of performance that closely aligns with the demands of the manufacturing environment and the insights needed to understand performance dynamics at the individual level. This makes it especially valuable in contexts where a nuanced understanding of personal performance factors is critical (Vaart, 2021).

1.5.2.3 Antecedents of Employee Performance

Employee performance is generally understood to encompass three key dimensions, as identified by Koopmans et al. (2014b). The first dimension, task performance, refers to the execution of core technical duties that align directly with an employee's job description and responsibilities. This involves completing work-related tasks efficiently and effectively, which is crucial for meeting organisational goals. The second dimension, contextual performance, involves discretionary behaviours that, while not formally required, support the broader organisational environment and contribute to its smooth functioning. These behaviours include helping colleagues, demonstrating initiative, and fostering a positive workplace culture (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). The third dimension, CWB, encompasses actions that are detrimental to the organisation, such as absenteeism, aggression, or sabotage (Spector & Fox, 2005). This dimension highlights behaviours that undermine productivity and workplace harmony. In manufacturing settings, these three performance dimensions are particularly significant because maintaining safety standards, ensuring compliance, and promoting effective teamwork are critical to operational success and employees' well-being (Triansyah, Hejin, & Stefania, 2023).

High or positive employee performance is influenced by several key factors that enable employees to exceed expectations. One important factor is the work environment, where supportive leadership, clear communication, and access to necessary resources help employees perform their tasks

effectively (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Recognition and reward systems also encourage employees to put in extra effort, as feeling valued increases motivation and commitment to organisational goals (Saks, 2006; Salunkhe et al., 2024; Shantz et al., 2016). Additionally, training and development opportunities enhance employees' skills and confidence, enabling them to work more efficiently and take initiative in problem-solving (Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011). Positive interpersonal relationships and teamwork further support high performance, as employees who feel connected and supported collaborate better and maintain a constructive work climate (Kwon & Kim, 2019). Lastly, when employees find their work meaningful and aligned with their strengths, they are more engaged, persistent, and willing to exceed role expectations (Kahn, 1990). Taken together, these factors create conditions that promote strong task execution, supportive workplace behaviours, and reduced likelihood of damaging or counterproductive actions.

1.5.2.4 Performance in the Manufacturing Context

In manufacturing environments, employee performance is often linked to output levels over a given period. Adherence to product quality standards and observance of safety protocols have both performance and legal implications, particularly in manufacturing contexts where non-compliance can result in operational inefficiencies, accidents, and financial losses. Zondo (2020) argues that South Africa's manufacturing sector requires urgent strategies to improve labour productivity, which is often hindered by outdated skills, high turnover, and low motivation, three critical barriers to sustained employee performance (Ashley & Brijball Parumasur, 2024; Knox and Marin-Cadavid, 2023; Lidman et al., 2023).

Outdated skills limit employees' ability to meet evolving job demands or adapt to technological advancements in production processes. As manufacturing systems become increasingly automated and data-driven, employees lacking up-to-date technical competencies struggle to operate machinery efficiently, troubleshoot issues, or maintain productivity levels (Zondo, 2020). This skill gap not only limits individual performance but also affects product quality and operational efficiency. Continuous training, upskilling, and exposure to new technologies are therefore essential to enhance employee competence and sustain performance in a competitive industrial environment.

High turnover negatively affects performance by disrupting workflow, weakening team cohesion, and eroding institutional knowledge. Frequent employee exits require continuous recruitment and

retraining efforts, which divert resources and time from productive activities. Moreover, turnover often undermines morale among remaining employees, who may experience increased workloads and uncertainty, leading to stress and disengagement (Zondo, 2020). Retaining skilled employees is therefore vital for maintaining consistent performance levels, preserving organisational memory, and fostering stable production output.

Low motivation further diminishes engagement, commitment, and discretionary effort. When employees feel undervalued, inadequately rewarded, or disconnected from organisational goals, their willingness to exert effort and contribute creatively declines (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Low motivation manifests in reduced enthusiasm, increased absenteeism, and minimal compliance with performance expectations. In contrast, motivated employees are more likely to demonstrate initiative, problem-solving ability, and persistence in achieving targets, all of which contribute to high performance.

In summary, outdated skills, high turnover, and low motivation interact to weaken productivity and performance within the manufacturing sector. Addressing these challenges through targeted training, employee retention strategies, and motivational initiatives is essential to enhance workforce capability, promote engagement, and ensure compliance with quality and safety standards, ultimately driving sustainable organisational performance. Studies such as Mukwakungu et al. (2018) show that performance in this sector can be enhanced by improving employee engagement and job satisfaction, underscoring the interconnection between motivation and output.

1.5.2.5 Measurement of Employee Performance

The Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ), developed by Koopmans (2013), is a widely used instrument for assessing employee performance by evaluating three core components: task performance, contextual performance, and CWB. This tool has been validated across diverse cultural contexts, supporting its broad applicability; however, concerns remain regarding potential biases inherent in self-reported data, such as social desirability or inaccurate self-assessment. In addition to self-report measures like the IWPQ, other approaches to evaluating employee performance include objective metrics, such as sales figures, output volumes, and error rates, which provide quantifiable data but may not capture the full scope of an employee's contributions (Vaart, 2021). Subjective assessments, including supervisor evaluations and peer reviews, offer insights from

observation but can be influenced by rater bias or limited perspectives. Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS) present a structured approach by assessing performance against specific, predefined behaviours, aiming to reduce ambiguity in evaluation. Each of these methods has inherent strengths and limitations, particularly in industries such as manufacturing, where individual performance is often intertwined with teamwork dynamics and machinery output, making the isolated measurement of employee contribution more complex. Employee performance is a multifaceted, behaviour-driven construct influenced by personal, job-related, and contextual factors. Though performance outcomes are measurable, they are also shaped by psychological and environmental conditions, underscoring the importance of understanding how engagement mechanisms contribute to performance, particularly in dynamic sectors such as manufacturing. Having defined employee engagement and employee performance as distinct constructs, the following section integrates these constructs by examining the theoretical and empirical link between them.

1.5.3 Linking Employee Engagement and Employee Performance

The conceptual relationship between employee engagement and performance is grounded in both motivational and organisational behaviour theories. Engagement, defined as a persistent and positive affective-motivational state of fulfilment (Schaufeli et al., 2002), is argued to facilitate discretionary effort, creativity, and persistence, all of which are drivers of individual and organisational performance (Saks, 2006). Engagement is a multidimensional construct involving vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002), while performance is characterised by task, contextual, and counterproductive behaviours (Koopmans, 2013). Both constructs have been defined and differentiated from related terms such as job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour. Numerous studies (e.g., Harter et al., 2002b; Saks, 2006; Christian et al., 2011) affirm a positive association between engagement and performance, with various moderators, such as leadership style, psychological safety, and job resources, influencing the strength of this relationship.

Numerous empirical studies, both older and recent, have confirmed a strong link between employee engagement and performance. Harter et al. (2002a), in a large-scale meta-analysis involving 7,939 business units across 36 companies, found that higher employee engagement was positively associated with key performance outcomes, including customer satisfaction, productivity, and profitability. Christian et al. (2011) reported moderate positive correlations between work engagement and both task and contextual performance, with correlation coefficients ranging from

0.36 to 0.38, indicating a meaningful relationship. They also reported that more proactive behaviours, fewer workplace accidents, and higher productivity, especially in physically demanding jobs, are associated with work engagement. These findings are particularly relevant in high-risk, performance-intensive environments such as manufacturing. In the African context, Naidoo and Werner (2022) found that within South African manufacturing settings, employee engagement was strongly linked to job safety compliance and overall performance. Similarly, a study by Ngwenya and Pelser (2020) in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector found that employee engagement mediates the relationship between psychological capital and job performance. These regional findings underscore the global and local significance of engagement in enhancing workforce effectiveness and organisational outcomes.

The strength of the relationship between employee engagement and performance varies and is shaped by several contextual and personal factors. Leadership style plays a key role (Breevaart et al., 2014); for example, transformational leadership has been shown to boost employee engagement, which then leads to better performance (Zhu et al, 2013). Additionally, organisational culture influences engagement (Ashley & Brijball Parumasur, 2024; Govender & Bussin, 2020), workplaces that foster inclusivity and psychological safety encourage employees to engage more fully. Personal resources, such as resilience and optimism, also strengthen engagement by helping employees manage high job demands and stress. Moreover, factors like job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and psychological capital act as mediators, influencing how engagement translates into performance outcomes (Saks, 2006; Supriyanto et al., 2021). This shows that the engagement-performance link is complex and depends on multiple internal and external variables.

Manufacturing presents a distinct operational context where engagement can directly impact tangible outcomes such as productivity and output quality, meaning engaged workers are more attentive, reducing errors (Zondo, 2020); safety, meaning high engagement, is associated with fewer workplace accidents; and employee retention, meaning engaged employees are less likely to leave, reducing turnover costs. Studies such as those by Moletsane et al. (2019) and Ekhsan et al. (2023) corroborate these outcomes in South African manufacturing firms.

Despite robust support for the engagement-performance relationship, several limitations persist:

- *Common method bias*: Many studies rely on self-report data, which may inflate observed relationships (Rich et al., 2010).

- *Cross-sectional designs*: These limit causal inference. Longitudinal or experimental designs are needed to validate directionality.
- *Lack of contextual specificity*: Most studies are based in Western service sectors, with limited applicability to emerging economies or manufacturing contexts.

The reviewed literature underscores a strong, yet contextually variable, relationship between employee engagement and performance. While numerous studies confirm the benefits of engagement, gaps remain in understanding how this plays out in the unique socio-economic and operational environment of South Africa's manufacturing sector. This study seeks to address this gap by providing sector-specific evidence using a theory-driven design grounded in the JD-R and SET frameworks.

1.5.4 Hypotheses Development

Based on the reviewed literature and theoretical models, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- *Hypothesis 1*: There is a significant positive relationship between Employee engagement and Employee performance.
- *Null Hypothesis 1*: There is a non-significant negative relationship between Employee engagement and Employee performance.
- *Hypothesis 2*: Higher employee engagement predicts higher employee performance.
- *Null Hypothesis 2*: Employee engagement does not predict employee performance.

1.5.5 Research Gaps and Justification for the Study

While a significant body of literature affirms the positive relationship between employee engagement and performance, substantial research gaps remain, particularly in emerging economies and manufacturing environments. Most studies on employee engagement have been conducted in service industries, corporate settings, or developed economies (Christian et al., 2011; Harter et al., 2002b), leaving the manufacturing sector underrepresented. Manufacturing firms operate in high-demand environments characterised by physical risks, repetitive tasks, and inconsistent access to job resources such as training or supportive supervision. These operational realities, combined with socio-economic and labour-related challenges, suggest that engagement in manufacturing may differ from that in service or corporate contexts.

Moreover, there is limited African-centric research. Western-focused frameworks often fail to capture engagement dynamics shaped by collectivist cultural norms, historical labour relations, and socio-economic pressures unique to regions such as South Africa's Northwest province (Heyns et al., 2021; Maake, Harmse, & Schultz, 2024). Contextual factors such as unemployment, skills shortages, and low job mobility may moderate or mediate the engagement–performance relationship in ways not accounted for in existing literature.

In addition to contextual limitations, methodological issues persist. Many studies rely on cross-sectional, self-report designs, which are prone to standard-method variance and causal ambiguity, making it difficult to determine whether engagement drives performance or vice versa (Rich et al., 2010; Saks, 2006). There is a need for longitudinal and mixed-methods approaches that combine quantitative rigour with qualitative depth to better understand engagement processes and outcomes in real-world settings.

Finally, personal and cultural moderators remain underexplored. While the JD-R model highlights the role of job demands and resources, it does not fully account for personal resources such as resilience, optimism, and psychological capital, or organisational factors like leadership style and culture, which may enable or inhibit engagement (Breevaart et al., 2014). Investigating these moderators in a manufacturing context is essential to developing integrative frameworks that reflect the interplay between structural, relational, and psychological variables. By addressing these gaps, the present study offers a contextualised investigation of employee engagement and performance in a manufacturing company in the Northwest province of South Africa. It examines engagement under real-world operational constraints and within a culturally distinct environment, thereby generating insights to inform evidence-based HR practices, leadership strategies, and theoretical frameworks in industrial settings.

1.6 CONCLUSION

The literature consistently supports the proposition that employee engagement is a vital predictor of performance. However, the strength and nature of this relationship depend on contextual variables, including job design, leadership, culture, and economic environment. The manufacturing sector, particularly in emerging economies, presents a complex landscape that requires tailored engagement

strategies to local realities. By focusing on a Northwest-based manufacturing company in South Africa, the present study addresses significant gaps in both theory and practice. It will offer evidence-based recommendations for improving workforce engagement and performance, contributing to the dual goals of organisational effectiveness and employee well-being. The insights derived from this review justify the study's proposed research questions and hypotheses and form the basis for the empirical investigation to follow. In doing so, this research will enhance scholarly understanding and offer meaningful contributions to management practices in the industrial sector. The following section details the research design, sampling strategy, measurement instruments, and statistical procedures employed in the study.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

1.7.1 Research approach

The research approach for this study is quantitative, aiming to measure the relationships among variables in the manufacturing sector objectively. This approach is suitable for testing hypotheses and drawing conclusions based on statistical analysis. The study employs structured data collection methods, including surveys, to gather numerical data that can be analysed to identify patterns, correlations, and potential causal relationships between the variables of interest (Leavy, 2022).

1.7.2 Research design/strategy

The study employs a non-experimental, once-off, quantitative design to describe the relationship between employee engagement (independent variable) and employee performance (dependent variable). This approach is apt for providing measurable and generalisable insights in the manufacturing sector (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

1.8 RESEARCH METHOD

1.8.1 Research setting/context

The study is being conducted in a manufacturing company based in the Northwest province of South Africa. The company has a diverse workforce, with diverse roles ranging from managerial to technical staff. The research aims to explore the relationship between employee engagement and performance in this context, with a particular focus on how these factors manifest in the manufacturing industry.

1.8.2 Population, sampling strategy, and sample

The target population for this study included 100 employees in the manufacturing company. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure that all relevant sub-groups (managers, administrative staff, sales, and technical staff) were proportionately represented. The final sample size was 60 employees. Participants were required to meet specific inclusion criteria to ensure that the sample was appropriate for addressing the research objectives. Only permanent employees employed at the manufacturing organisation at the time of data collection were eligible to participate in the study. Participants were further required to have at least 1 year of tenure within the organisation to ensure adequate exposure to organisational processes, supervisory practices, and job demands relevant to employee engagement and performance. Both male and female employees across different operational and support functions were included to obtain a representative view of the workforce.

Employees employed on a temporary, contract, or probationary basis were excluded from the study, as their limited tenure may not have provided sufficient opportunity to develop stable perceptions of engagement or to demonstrate consistent performance behaviours. Additionally, employees who were on extended leave during the data collection period were excluded, as they were not actively engaged in daily work activities at the time of the study. Incomplete or partially completed questionnaires were also excluded from the final analysis to maintain the integrity and reliability of the data.

Executives and general workers were excluded from the study because the focus was on roles that have a more direct influence on day-to-day operations. Executives, due to their strategic roles, and general workers, because of their varied and less permanent tasks, might not provide the most reliable insights into the engagement-performance dynamics being studied. Excluding these groups ensures that the study remains focused on core operational roles, enhancing the accuracy and generalisability of the findings within the intended scope.

1.8.2.1 Inclusion Criteria:

- Employees aged 19-65.
- Permanent employees.
- Employees with one or more years of experience at the company.

- Any employees who are not part of the executive management or general workers.

1.8.2.2 Exclusion Criteria:

- Employees under 19 and above 65 years
- Temporary, part-time, or fixed-contract employees.
- Employees with less than 1 year working experience at the company
- Executives and general workers.

1.8.3 Data Collection

Data collection is conducted using a structured quantitative questionnaire administered online via SurveyMonkey. The primary data collection instrument for this study is the Gallup Q12® workplace audit, complemented by the IWPQ. Both tools were validated for reliability and effectiveness in assessing employee engagement and performance. The Q12® has demonstrated high internal consistency in previous studies, with Cronbach's alpha values typically exceeding 0.85 (Harter et al., 2002b). A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.923 was obtained for the 12 items, confirming reliability. According to Cortina's guideline, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher is deemed acceptable (Havenga et al., 2013). The IWPQ has demonstrated good reliability across studies, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.83 for task performance, 0.85 for contextual performance, and 0.78 for CWB (Koopmans, 2015). It was selected for this study due to its strong psychometric properties and suitability across occupational settings. This indicates that both instruments are reliable for measuring the construct of employees in the South African context. To address the common method bias risk inherent in self-report surveys, steps were taken to mitigate its potential impact. This included assuring participants of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses to reduce social desirability bias.

1.8.4 Research procedure

The research began by obtaining ethical clearance from UNISA and permission from the company's CEOs to ensure proper authorisation and support for the study. Following this, participants were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in the research, aiming to assemble a representative, cooperative sample. The survey link was then distributed to the selected participants

through email and WhatsApp to facilitate easy access and increase response rates. Data collection was conducted using Google Forms, with measures in place to guarantee the anonymity and confidentiality of all respondents. Finally, the collected data was analysed using appropriate statistical methods to identify trends and explore the relationships between employee engagement and performance within the organisation.

1.8.5 Data Analysis

Data was analysed quantitatively using statistical methods, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. The analysis focused on understanding the relationship between employee engagement (as measured by the Gallup Q12®) and individual work performance (as measured by the IWPQ). The results were generalised to the group level, with particular attention to variations across different demographic sub-groups.

1.8.6 Ensuring the quality of the research and ethical considerations

To ensure the quality of the research, several measures were taken:

- **Validity and Reliability:** The Gallup Q12® and IWPQ instruments were selected for their proven validity and reliability in diverse contexts, including South Africa.
- **Ethical Clearance:** Ethical clearance was sought from UNISA in November 2023.
- **Confidentiality:** SurveyMonkey was used to ensure that no personal information, including IP addresses, was recorded.
- **Informed Consent:** Participants provided informed consent before participating, with full disclosure of the study's purpose and procedures.
- **Compliance with Legal Obligations:** The study adhered to the Employment Equity Act of 1998 and HPCSA guidelines to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all participants.

1.9 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapters were presented as follows.

1.9.1 Chapter 2: Article

Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive article that forms the theoretical and empirical foundation of the study. It begins by providing precise and concise conceptual definitions of all key constructs. The article proceeds with a synthesis and critical evaluation of existing literature, identifying prevailing themes, patterns, and findings across related studies. Emphasis is placed on how constructs were measured, with particular attention to the design, reliability, and validity of frequently used instruments, thereby justifying their application in the current study.

1.9.2 Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations, and recommendations

Chapter 3 provides a comprehensive synthesis of the study's conclusions, acknowledges its limitations, and offers practical and scholarly recommendations. The chapter begins with theoretical conclusions derived from the literature reviewed in the earlier chapters. This is followed by empirical conclusions, which draw on the main findings of the research. It focuses on interpreting the findings, considering the literature, highlighting where the results align with or deviate from previous studies, and demonstrating how the study's empirical aims were fulfilled.

The limitations section presents a critical reflection on the methodological choices made throughout the research process, including considerations around the research design, sampling strategy, data collection methods, and analytical techniques. The chapter then outlines recommendations for practice, specifically within the organisational or contextual setting where the study was conducted, offering insights that may benefit stakeholders and decision-makers.

Additionally, recommendations for future research are provided to encourage continued exploration and refinement of the topic and to address gaps or new questions that have emerged. Finally, the study encapsulates the research's overall contribution, reinforcing its value in both academic and practical domains.

1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In Chapter 1, the scientific orientation to the research was discussed. This included the background and motivation, the research problem, aims, the paradigm perspective, a review of the relevant literature, the research design, and the methods. The chapter ended with the chapter layout.

CHAPTER 2 ARTICLE

Relationship Between Employee Engagement and Employee Performance at a Northwest Province-Based Manufacturing Company

Abstract

Orientation: Employee engagement is widely recognised as a driver of organisational effectiveness, influencing productivity, commitment, and performance. However, its role in South Africa's manufacturing sector remains underexplored.

Research purpose: The study investigated the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance in a manufacturing company in the Northwest province of South Africa.

Motivation for the study: The South African manufacturing sector has experienced persistent declines in labour productivity. Employee engagement presents a potential lever to address these challenges, yet limited empirical research exists within the local context.

Research approach/design and method: A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was employed. A stratified random sample of 60 employees participated. Employee engagement was measured using the Gallup Q12® Workplace Audit, and performance was assessed with the IWPQ. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlations, and multiple regression analysis.

Main findings: Results revealed a significant positive correlation between employee engagement and employee performance. Engagement significantly predicted task and contextual performance but showed no significant relationship with CWB.

Practical/managerial implications: Findings highlight the importance of enhancing employee engagement through recognition programmes, leadership support, and development initiatives. Such strategies may improve employee performance and overall productivity in manufacturing environments.

Contribution/value-add: This study provides empirical evidence in a South African manufacturing context, specifically in the Northwest province. It contributes to the limited body of local research on engagement and performance, offering insights for both practice and academia in IOP.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 Introduction

Employee engagement is widely recognised as a critical driver of employee productivity and performance, particularly in labour-intensive sectors such as manufacturing (Zondo, 2020). In the South African manufacturing context, growing concerns about employee disengagement have intensified scholarly and practitioner interest in understanding the factors that influence performance outcomes. Employee performance, defined as the set of behaviours and outcomes that contribute to organisational goals, is a central determinant of organisational effectiveness (Campbell et al., 1990). It encompasses task performance, contextual performance, and the avoidance of counterproductive work behaviours (Koopmans, 2013). Within manufacturing environments, employee performance is especially consequential, as it directly affects product quality, operational efficiency, and workplace safety (Mukwakungu et al., 2018; Zondo, 2020). Achieving optimal performance is unlikely in the absence of an engaged workforce, underscoring the importance of examining engagement as a key antecedent of performance.

A substantial body of organisational research has established a positive relationship between employee engagement and performance-related outcomes. Meta-analytic evidence indicates that engaged employees demonstrate higher productivity, improved customer satisfaction, and superior financial performance (Christian et al., 2011; Harter et al., 2002a). Engagement fosters discretionary effort, persistence, and creativity, behaviours that are strongly associated with both individual and organisational performance (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Shantz et al., 2016; Salunkhe et al., 2024). In manufacturing settings, higher levels of engagement have further been linked to reduced accident rates, lower turnover, and stronger adherence to safety and quality standards (Naidoo & Werner, 2022; Zondo, 2020).

Despite this well-established relationship, evidence from emerging economies suggests that contextual factors such as resource constraints, labour relations, and socio-cultural dynamics may shape how engagement translates into performance. Within South Africa, and particularly in the Northwest Province, empirical research examining the engagement–performance relationship in manufacturing organisations remains limited. This gap is noteworthy given the sector’s substantial contribution to national GDP and employment (Kreuser & Brink, 2021), alongside ongoing challenges related to declining productivity, skills shortages, and low employee motivation (Statistics

South Africa, 2024; Zondo, 2020). Accordingly, this study examines the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance in a Northwest-based manufacturing organisation, with the aim of providing context-specific insights that extend existing theory and inform practice within the South African manufacturing sector.

2.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The manufacturing sector transforms raw materials into higher-value products, generating employment and driving economic growth (Kenton, 2022). In South Africa, the sector contributed approximately 13% to GDP in 2018 and employed over 1.17 million people in the formal sector (Kreuser & Brink, 2021; South Africa's Manufacturing Industry, 2018). Sustained productivity and competitiveness in manufacturing rely heavily on engaged employees (Tensay & Singh, 2020).

Kahn (1990) conceptualised engagement as the mobilisation of physical, cognitive, and emotional energies at work, while Sudibjo and Sutarji (2020) emphasise alignment between employee identity and job role. Engagement also entails mental immersion and genuine enthusiasm for work tasks (Abdulrahman et al., 2022). Employee Engagement has been examined extensively in manufacturing, service and corporate sectors. However, findings may not be directly transferable to a manufacturing firm based in the North West province of South Africa, where working conditions, resource availability, and supervisory structures often differ. For instance, physical demands, safety risks, and the routinised nature of production work may alter both the antecedents and outcomes of engagement. A lack of empirical research in these environments, particularly in the Northwest province, limits the sector's ability to design evidence-based engagement strategies. Engaged employees are not only more productive but also exhibit higher job satisfaction and commitment, leading to improved organisational outcomes (Yadav et al., 2022).

Employee performance is a critical focus for organisations, encompassing behaviours and outcomes that contribute to organisational success (Kelidbari et al., 2011; Abbas & Yaqoob, 2009). It involves meeting job tasks within expected standards and timeframes (Lee et al., 2013) and influences decisions related to rewards, promotions, and career development. Performance reflects employees' behaviours and contributions toward organisational goals (Ahmad & Shahzad, 2011). Factors such as work environment, leadership, training, and engagement significantly affect performance (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Performance categories include core task performance, citizenship

behaviours, and counterproductive behaviours, all of which impact organisational outcomes such as innovation and client satisfaction (Sadikoglu & Cemal, 2010). Enhancing employee performance is increasingly recognised as essential, with employee engagement serving as a key driver of improvement. Raza et al. (2021) note that high-productivity organisations are distinguished by active employee involvement in performance enhancement. Engaged employees support organisational competitiveness, the achievement of production targets, and operational efficiency (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). Goestjahjanti et al. (2020) argue that organisational objectives are attainable only when employees are fully engaged in their roles. In manufacturing firms, investment in a work environment that promotes motivation, involvement, and appreciation benefits both employees and organisational performance, thereby supporting long-term sustainability (Keino et al., 2023).

In manufacturing environments, employee performance is often linked to output levels over a given period. Zondo (2020) states that South Africa's manufacturing sector requires urgent strategies to improve labour productivity, which is often hindered by outdated skills, high turnover, and low motivation. Studies such as Mukwakungu et al. (2018) show that performance in this sector can be enhanced by improving employee engagement and job satisfaction, underscoring the interconnection between motivation and output. This study addresses this gap by examining how engagement predicts performance in a real-world manufacturing setting.

2.3 TRENDS FROM THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

The link between employee engagement and performance is theoretically anchored in motivational and organisational behaviour frameworks. Engagement, conceptualised as a persistent, positive affective-motivational state of fulfilment (Schaufeli et al., 2002), drives discretionary effort, creativity, and persistence, all of which underpin individual performance (Saks, 2006). While employee engagement is multidimensional (Schaufeli et al., 2002), performance captures task execution, contextual contributions, and counterproductive behaviours (Koopmans, 2013). Importantly, engagement is distinct from related constructs such as job satisfaction or organisational citizenship behaviour, which complicates comparisons across studies and may explain inconsistent findings in the literature. Empirical evidence consistently supports a positive link between employee engagement and employee performance. Harter et al. (2002b) demonstrated in a meta-analysis of 7,939 business units across 36 companies that higher engagement correlates with enhanced customer satisfaction, productivity, and profitability. Christian et al. (2011) similarly reported moderate

positive correlations between engagement and task/contextual performance ($r = 0.36\text{--}0.38$), highlighting a meaningful but not deterministic relationship. Bakker and Demerouti (2008) extended these findings to physically demanding roles, showing that engagement enhances proactivity, reduces workplace accidents, and boosts productivity. However, while the evidence is robust, effect sizes vary across contexts, indicating that engagement alone does not uniformly translate to performance gains; moderating factors such as leadership style, psychological safety, and job resources play critical roles (Saks, 2006; Harter et al., 2002a; Christian et al., 2011).

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model offers a useful theoretical lens, positing that job and personal resources foster engagement, which in turn drives performance outcomes (The job demands-resources model of work engagement in South African call centres, 2018). Despite its explanatory power, gaps remain regarding how specific job characteristics interact with engagement in manufacturing contexts, particularly in high-risk environments where safety and operational precision are critical. Regionally, African studies underscore the practical relevance of engagement. Naidoo and Werner (2022) found a strong relationship between engagement, safety compliance, and performance in South African manufacturing. Similarly, Ngwenya and Pelsler (2020) demonstrated that engagement mediates the link between psychological capital and job performance in Zimbabwean factories. These findings highlight contextual consistency with global trends but also reveal a research gap: few studies rigorously examine the mechanisms by which engagement translates into measurable output in manufacturing settings, especially given technological change, skill gaps, and workforce turnover.

While the literature affirms a positive relationship between employee engagement and employee performance, contradictions and gaps persist: the strength and nature of this link are context-dependent. There is limited clarity on causality, and African manufacturing-specific evidence remains sparse, signalling a need for focused empirical investigation that considers both employee engagement and employee performance in the manufacturing sector.

2.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Although the positive impact of employee engagement is widely accepted, there are critical gaps in understanding its role within the manufacturing sector in emerging economies. Inconsistencies exist in how engagement is conceptualised and measured across contexts, and many studies suffer from

methodological limitations such as cross-sectional design and standard method bias (Rich et al., 2010). There is also insufficient focus on mediators and moderators, such as psychological capital, leadership style, and organisational culture, that could influence the engagement-performance relationship.

However, there is a growing recognition that findings from developed economies may not directly translate to emerging markets such as South Africa. African studies, e.g., Ngwenya and Pelsler (2020), indicate that engagement in African workplaces is shaped by contextual variables such as historical inequality, collectivist cultural norms, and job insecurity. Additionally, research in the manufacturing sector in South Africa is underrepresented, despite the unique demands of this industry, including physical risks, repetitive tasks, and production-driven environments, that influence engagement and performance dynamics (Zondo, 2020; Mukwakungu et al., 2018).

Limited studies have examined the relationship between engagement and performance in the manufacturing sector of the Northwest Province, an emerging economy. Research in African contexts (e.g., Naidoo & Werner, 2022; Zondo, 2020) highlights unique challenges such as labour unrest, safety concerns, and socio-economic disparities that shape engagement differently from Western contexts. Zondo (2020) and Naidoo and Werner (2022) highlight the importance of researching engagement in manufacturing, where operational efficiency and employee well-being are interdependent. However, few studies have examined how engagement is shaped under these sector-specific constraints, particularly in resource-limited settings. Much of the existing literature on employee engagement has been conducted within service industries, corporate settings, and developed economies (Christian et al., 2011; Harter et al., 2002a). These findings, while valuable, may not generalise to labour-intensive, operationally demanding sectors such as manufacturing, especially within South Africa's unique socio-economic landscape.

This study aims to address these gaps by providing insights that inform strategies to enhance employee engagement and performance in the manufacturing sector, specifically by examining the relationship between these constructs. The central research problem is the limited understanding of how employee engagement influences employee performance in South Africa's manufacturing sector, particularly in the Northwest Province. Although some evidence indicates that engagement enhances performance (Saks, 2006; Harter et al., 2002a), the underlying causal mechanisms and context-specific factors remain unclear.

The research objectives and specific aims relating to the literature review are:

- To conceptualise employee engagement
- To conceptualise employee performance
- Through the literature review, determine the existing relationship between employee engagement and employee performance, both generally and within the manufacturing sector.

The specific aims relating to the empirical study are:

- To determine the strength and direction of the relationship between employee engagement (independent variable) and employee performance (dependent variable) within the manufacturing sector
- To establish the predictive nature of the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance, providing insights into how changes in engagement levels affect performance outcomes
- Based on the research findings, formulate practical recommendations for IOP and the manufacturing sector to enhance employee engagement and performance. Additionally, to contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence and insights into the interplay between employee engagement and performance in the manufacturing sector.

2.5 THE POTENTIAL VALUE ADDED BY THE STUDY

This study addresses these limitations by conducting a context-specific investigation of how engagement influences performance in the South African manufacturing sector. The research contributes both theoretical and practical value by offering insights into a setting that has been largely overlooked in engagement studies. One of the key contributions of this study is to address the underrepresentation of the manufacturing sector in engagement research. Much of the existing literature has focused on service industries, corporate environments, or developed countries (Christian et al., 2011; Harter et al., 2002a), limiting the generalisability of findings to labour-intensive, operationally demanding sectors such as manufacturing. Manufacturing contexts present distinct challenges, such as repetitive tasks, physical safety concerns, and inconsistent access to job resources, such as training or supervisory support. These sector-specific conditions influence both the expression of engagement and its outcomes. Research by Zondo (2020) and Naidoo and Werner (2022) underscores the importance of understanding engagement in these complex operational

environments, where employee well-being and operational efficiency are closely intertwined. Nevertheless, few empirical studies have specifically investigated how engagement manifests in these settings, especially in resource-constrained contexts such as South Africa's Northwest Province.

The limited representation of African data in engagement research further compounds this gap. Most studies draw from Western contexts and theoretical frameworks, overlooking the cultural, historical, and socio-economic realities that shape engagement in African labour markets. Factors such as South Africa's history of labour inequality, collectivist cultural orientations such as Ubuntu, and socio-economic challenges, including high unemployment and limited job mobility, can significantly influence engagement processes (Heyns et al., 2021). As such, engagement cannot be assumed to operate uniformly across contexts, and African-centric research is critical to develop a nuanced understanding of how engagement is formed, maintained, and linked to performance in this setting.

Methodologically, the existing literature often suffers from design limitations that undermine the credibility of its findings. Many studies rely on cross-sectional designs and single-source self-report measures (Rich et al., 2010; Saks, 2006), which are susceptible to standard method variance and causal ambiguity. These limitations make it difficult to determine whether engagement leads to performance or vice versa. To address this, the current study adopts a more robust methodological approach that prioritises contextual understanding, supports causal inference, and incorporates diverse data sources to enhance validity. The inclusion of mixed methods or longitudinal insights can offer a deeper understanding of how engagement unfolds over time and under specific organisational conditions.

In addition to these gaps, personal and cultural moderators remain underexplored in engagement research. Although the JD-R model has advanced our understanding of how job resources and demands influence engagement, it often overlooks the role of personal resources such as resilience, optimism, and psychological capital. Moreover, cultural values and leadership styles may serve as critical enablers or barriers to engagement, particularly in diverse and historically complex environments such as South Africa (Ashley & Brijball Parumasur, 2024; Knox and Marin-Cadavid, 2023; Lidman et al., 2023). For instance, the concept of Ubuntu, which emphasises communal harmony and collective well-being, can influence how employees perceive engagement and support within the workplace. Additionally, South Africa's labour history, marked by a legacy of inequality and struggle for workers' rights, can impact current workforce dynamics, affecting trust,

collaboration, and motivation. Breevaart et al. (2014) have called for more integrative frameworks that incorporate psychological, relational, and contextual factors to explain the engagement–performance link better. This study responds to that call by examining how personal and organisational variables interact to shape engagement within a culturally and operationally unique environment.

This study offers a timely and significant contribution to the literature by examining employee engagement and performance within a South African manufacturing company. It provides contextual relevance by applying theoretical models to real-world constraints characteristic of local industrial settings. Additionally, the research generates actionable insights to inform evidence-based human resource practices and leadership strategies tailored to the manufacturing sector. By situating the investigation in a culturally and economically distinct region, the study tests established theoretical assumptions and adapts them to a context where they have seldom been applied, thereby advancing both academic understanding and practical relevance.

2.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

2.6.1 Research approach

This study followed a quantitative research approach, which is appropriate for examining the statistical relationship between variables, in this case, employee engagement and employee performance. A cross-sectional field survey design was employed, allowing data to be collected at a single point in time from a specific population within its natural work setting. This design was chosen for its efficiency in measuring the prevalence and strength of relationships between variables without manipulating any conditions.

The study utilised primary data, collected directly from participants through validated self-report questionnaires. Specifically, the Gallup Q12® Workplace Audit measured employee engagement, and the IWPQ assessed performance. The data analysis followed a correlational approach, using descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlations, and regression analysis to determine the nature and strength of the relationship between engagement and performance outcomes.

2.6.2 Research method

Research participants

The target population for this study consisted of all permanently employed staff members at a Northwest-based manufacturing company aged 19 to 65 years and with at least 1 year of service. A stratified random sampling procedure was applied to ensure representation across key job functions, including management, technical, administrative, and sales roles. Of a total population of 100 employees, 60 completed the survey, yielding a 60% response rate.

Table 1: Summary of research participants' biographical characteristics

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<i>Gender</i>	Male	32
	Female	28
<i>Age group</i>	20–29 years	19
	30–39 years	21
	40–49 years	14
	50–65 years	5
	65+ years	1
<i>Role type</i>	Technical	24
	Administration	20
	Management	12
	Sales	4

The majority of respondents were male (53.3%), with the largest age group being 30–39 years (35%). Most participants held technical roles (40%), followed by administrative (33.3%) and management (20%) positions. A smaller proportion (6.7%) were in sales roles. This demographic distribution represents a broad cross-section of the organisation's workforce, thereby enhancing the representativeness and relevance of the study's findings.

Measuring instruments

Employee engagement: This construct was measured using the Gallup Q12® Workplace Audit, a

widely validated instrument developed by Gallup Inc. The scale consists of 12 items that assess various dimensions of employee engagement, including clarity of expectations, recognition, opportunities for development, and a sense of being cared for at work. An example item includes: "I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right." Responses were captured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Given its validity, reliability, and cultural relevance, a quantitative questionnaire replicating the Gallup Q12® workplace audit was selected for data collection (Harter et al., 2013). All items are positively phrased, and higher scores indicate greater levels of engagement. No reverse scoring was required.

To ensure the cultural and linguistic suitability of the Q12 for South African manufacturing employees, the instrument underwent pilot testing with a small group of employees from the sector. Feedback confirmed that the items were clearly understood and relevant, prompting no significant adjustments. This process ensured the instrument resonated with the local workforce, enhancing the credibility and reliability of the collected data.

The Q12® has demonstrated high internal consistency in previous studies, with Cronbach's alpha values typically exceeding 0.85 (Harter et al., 2002b). A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.923 was obtained for the 12 items, confirming reliability. According to Cortina's guideline, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher is deemed acceptable (Havenga et al., 2013). This indicates that the instrument is reliable for measuring the construct of employees in the South African context. The tool's widespread use across industries and its ability to predict performance and retention outcomes formed the rationale for its use in this study. The Gallup Q12 was selected for this study because it is brief (reducing respondent burden in operational settings), behaviourally anchored (which aids managerial translation of results), and has demonstrated criterion-related validity with organisational outcomes across diverse workplace samples. Compared to alternatives such as the UWES, the Q12 emphasises managerial levers (e.g., role clarity, recognition) and was practically feasible within the studied manufacturing context, where shorter instruments increase completion rates. Future research should compare Q12 outcomes with UWES measures to deepen construct comparability within South African manufacturing.

Employee performance: Employee performance was measured using the IWPQ. The IWPQ (Koopmans, 2015) is an 18-item scale developed in the Netherlands to measure the three main dimensions of job performance: task performance, contextual performance, and CWB. All items have

a 5-point rating scale (0 = seldom to 4 = always for task and contextual performance; and 0 = never to 4 = often for counterproductive work behaviour). Task performance is revealed through items 1 to 5; contextual performance is revealed through items 6 to 13; CWB is revealed through items 14 to 18 (Widyastuti & Hidayat, 2018).

Participants responded to items on a 5-point frequency scale, ranging from 1 (Seldom) to 5 (Always). Several items in the counterproductive behaviour subscale were reverse-scored (e.g., “I complain about unimportant matters at work”). Total and subscale scores were computed by averaging the items within each dimension. Higher scores on task and contextual performance indicate higher levels of positive performance, while higher (reverse-coded) scores on counterproductive behaviour reflect fewer negative workplace behaviours. The IWPQ has demonstrated good reliability across studies, with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of 0.83 for task performance, 0.85 for contextual performance, and 0.78 for CWB (Koopmans, 2015). It was selected for this study due to its strong psychometric properties and suitability across occupational settings. The IWPQ assesses critical aspects of performance, including task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive behaviours, across a range of jobs. The questionnaire has three reliable dimensions and shows significant connections with other performance measures. The IWPQ is a suitable tool for evaluating job performance, mainly focusing on behaviours that contribute to organisational goals (Ramos-Villagrasa et al., 2019). (Ramos-Villagrasa et al., 2019, pp. 195-205)

According to van der Vaart (2021), Koopmans' (2013) initial study established the questionnaire's psychometric reliability in the Netherlands. This includes various aspects of validity (face, structural, construct, convergent, and discrimination) and reliability. The questionnaire has been translated and validated in several countries outside the Netherlands, including Argentina (Gabini & Salessi, 2016), Indonesia (Widyastuti & Hidayat, 2018), North America (Koopmans, 2015), and Spain (Ramos-Villagrasa et al., 2019). All these studies affirm the instrument's psychometric reliability. A study conducted in South Africa has yielded results strongly supporting the construct validity of the IWPQ in this context. This study aimed to enhance our understanding of the psychometric qualities of the IWPQ by validating it in a South African context, focusing on convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity (van der Vaart, 2021).

Research procedure

Data collection was conducted after obtaining ethical clearance from the UNISA ethics committee. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the participating manufacturing company located in the Northwest province of South Africa. The online survey link (Google Forms) was distributed via email and WhatsApp to accommodate varying communication preferences. The data were collected using the Google Forms platform, ensuring that participation was anonymous and that all responses were kept strictly confidential.

The data was analysed using statistical methods to identify trends and examine the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance. Participants were first informed about the study's purpose, their rights as respondents, and the voluntary nature of their participation. They were required to give informed consent before accessing the questionnaire, which included demographic items, the Gallup Q12® Workplace Audit, and the IWPQ. Responses were reviewed for completeness by a statistician before statistical analysis. Only aggregate-level findings were reported to maintain participant anonymity.

Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages) were used to summarise the participants' demographic profile and overall trends in employee engagement and performance.

2.7 RESULTS

2.7.1 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

Descriptive statistics and reliability estimates for the study variables are presented in Table 2. The work engagement scale, consisting of 12 items, showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .87$). The overall work performance scale (18 items) and its subscales, task performance ($\alpha = .88$), context performance ($\alpha = .84$), and CWB ($\alpha = .91$), also demonstrated acceptable to excellent reliability. Job satisfaction, measured with a single item, was not subjected to reliability analysis.

Participants reported relatively high levels of work engagement ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.62$) and job satisfaction ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.21$). Work performance scores exhibited greater variability, with task performance showing the highest average ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.86$) and counterproductive behaviour

the lowest ($M = 0.95$, $SD = 0.61$). An overview of the descriptive and reliability statistics for each scale is presented below.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the employee engagement and employee performance, total and subscales

	<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation (SD)</i>	<i>Range (Min - Max)</i>	<i>Reliability (α)</i>
<i>Job Satisfaction</i>	1	3.83	1.21	1.00 - 5.00	-
<i>Work Engagement</i>	12	4.08	.62	2.33 - 4.92	.87
<i>Work Performance</i>	-	-	-	-	-
- <i>Total</i>	18	2.23	.54	1.00 - 3.72	.85
- <i>Task Performance</i>	5	3.07	.86	0.80 - 4.00	.88
- <i>Context Performance</i>	8	2.80	.76	1.13 - 4.00	.84
- <i>Counterproductivity</i>	5	.95	.61	.35 - 3.20	.91

2.7.2 Research Question 1: Correlations between employee engagement and employee performance

The first hypothesis (H_0 : There is no relationship between work engagement and work performance; H_1 : There is a relationship between work engagement and work performance) was tested using Pearson’s correlation coefficient. As shown in Table 3, employee engagement was significantly and positively correlated with overall employee performance ($r = .49$, $p < .01$), task performance ($r = .60$, $p < .01$), and context performance ($r = .41$, $p < .01$). There was no significant relationship between employee engagement and CWB ($r = .01$, $p > .05$).

The lack of a significant relationship between engagement and CWB suggests that the drivers of deviance are distinct from the drivers of positive performance. Stressor–strain frameworks propose that CWBs arise from negative workplace stressors and the resulting strain (Spector & Fox, 2005); thus, reducing CWB likely requires interventions targeting stress and perceptions of injustice, in

addition to engagement strategies.

Table 3: Correlations between employee engagement and the employee performance total and subscales

	<i>Job</i>	<i>Employee</i>	<i>Employee Performance</i>		
	<i>Satisfactio</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	Task	Context	Counterprodu
<i>n</i>			Performance	Performance	ctivity
<i>Work</i>	.36**				
<i>Engagement</i>					
<i>Work</i>					
<i>Performance</i>					
- <i>Total</i>	.29*	.49**			
- <i>Task</i>	.28*	.60**	.71**		
<i>Performance</i>					
- <i>Context</i>	.21	.41**	.89**	.51**	
<i>Performance</i>					
- <i>Counterproduct</i>	.13	.01	.52**	-.06	.31*
<i>ivity</i>					

Note: * $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

2.7.3 Research Question 2: Predictive relationships between engagement and performance

To test the second hypothesis (H_0 : Work engagement does not predict work performance; H_1 : Work engagement predicts work performance), multiple regression analyses were conducted (see Table 4).

Results showed that work engagement was a significant predictor of:

Overall work performance ($\beta = .43, t = 4.28, p < .01$),

Task performance ($\beta = .84, t = 5.72, p < .01$),

Context performance ($\beta = .50, t = 3.37, p < .01$).

However, work engagement did not significantly predict CWB ($\beta = .01, t = 0.10, p > .05$) as seen in Table 5 below.

These findings support the alternative hypotheses for overall, task, and context performance, but not for counterproductive behaviour.

Table 4: Predictive relationships between employee engagement (Predictor) and the employee performance total and subscales (Outcomes)

	Coefficient (β)	t-value
Employee Performance		
- Total	.43**	4.28
- Task Performance	.84**	5.72
- Context Performance	.50**	3.37
- Counterproductivity	.01	.10

Note: * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

2.8 DISCUSSION

2.8.1 Main Objectives of the Study

The overarching objective of this study was to comprehensively investigate the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance within the manufacturing sector, specifically at a company based in the Northwest province.

- The research aimed to explore this relationship both conceptually, by examining how employee engagement and employee performance are defined and understood in the literature, and empirically, by assessing the strength, direction, and predictive nature of this relationship in a real-world organisational context.
- The study sought to determine whether employee engagement (independent variable) significantly predicts employee performance (dependent variable), including its subcomponents: task performance, contextual performance, and CWB.
- In addition, the study aimed to offer actionable recommendations for both the field of IOP and the manufacturing industry, based on empirical findings, to enhance workplace engagement and productivity. This dual focus on theoretical grounding and practical application highlights the study's contribution to both academic literature and organisational practice.

2.8.2 Importance and Contribution of the Study

The importance of this study lies in its focus on the manufacturing sector, a cornerstone of economic development that transforms raw materials into high-value products, thereby generating employment, boosting productivity, and contributing significantly to South Africa's GDP (Kenton, 2022). Given the sector's current productivity challenges, this study is both timely and relevant. It addresses the pressing issue of declining labour efficiency and the evident symptoms of employee disengagement, particularly in the Northwest-based manufacturing firm. Employee engagement has been widely recognised as a powerful driver of organisational performance, with research consistently showing that engaged employees exhibit higher productivity, lower turnover, and more substantial organisational commitment. However, despite the critical role of engagement in workplace success, empirical research on its influence within the South African manufacturing context remains limited, particularly in under-researched regions such as the Northwest Province.

This study helps bridge that gap by empirically examining how employee engagement influences task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive behaviour. It extends current literature by providing sector-specific insights and adds practical value by identifying the engagement-performance dynamics in regions and industries facing notable productivity issues. From a theoretical standpoint, the study deepens the understanding of the engagement-performance relationship by addressing inconsistencies in existing literature, particularly regarding the psychological mechanisms linking the two constructs. From a practical perspective, the study offers actionable recommendations for IOP professionals and organisational leaders seeking to enhance employee performance through targeted engagement strategies.

Ultimately, this research not only informs academic inquiry but also provides a framework for improving operational efficiency and employee outcomes in a critical economic sector. Its findings are expected to guide future interventions and policies aimed at addressing the disengagement crisis, improving workforce morale, and fostering sustainable organisational success in South Africa's manufacturing landscape.

2.8.3 Results in Relation to the Research Objectives and Hypotheses

This study aimed to examine the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance within a manufacturing company in the Northwest province. The discussion below interprets the findings in relation to the research objectives and existing literature.

Research Objective 1: Determine the strength and direction of the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance

The findings indicate a positive and significant relationship between employee engagement and performance across three dimensions: overall work performance, task performance, and contextual performance. These results are consistent with prior research demonstrating that engaged employees tend to exhibit higher productivity and commitment. For instance, Harter et al. (2002a) found that engagement positively influences employee performance, while Alagaraja and Shuck (2015) emphasised that engagement enhances motivation, commitment, and discretionary effort, which directly improves performance outcomes (Al Barwany, 2024; Omachi & Ajewumi, 2024). The strongest associations were observed for task performance, supporting findings by Mukwakungu et al. (2018), who highlighted that engaged employees are particularly driven to fulfil core job responsibilities effectively. The positive link with contextual performance aligns with Heyns et al. (2021), who reported that engaged employees are more likely to engage in organisational citizenship behaviours, contributing to a supportive and cooperative work environment. Interestingly, the study did not find a significant relationship between engagement and CWB. This aligns with research by Zhu et al. (2009), which suggests that engagement alone may not be sufficient to deter negative or deviant behaviours. Such behaviours may instead be influenced by additional factors, such as job stress, management practices, or organisational culture, suggesting that fostering engagement must be complemented by targeted interventions to mitigate counterproductive behaviours (Ashley & Brijball Parumasur, 2024; Knox and Marin-Cadavid, 2023; Lidman et al., 2023).

Overall, the findings support the alternative hypothesis (H₁) that employee engagement is positively related to desirable performance outcomes. They further reinforce the critical role of engagement in driving both individual task efficiency and broader organisational support behaviours within manufacturing contexts.

Research Objective 2: Establish the predictive nature of the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance

The regression analyses demonstrate that engagement not only correlates with performance outcomes but also significantly predicts overall, task, and contextual performance. These findings align with prior studies by Christian et al. (2011) and Harter et al. (2002b), which indicate that engagement is an important predictor of employee effectiveness. The powerful predictive relationship with task performance suggests that engagement motivates employees to focus on core responsibilities, enhancing operational efficiency in manufacturing environments (Mukwakungu et al., 2018). Consistent with the correlation findings, engagement did not significantly predict counterproductive behaviour, supporting the notion that additional variables, such as organisational culture, supervisory practices, or psychological stress, may moderate or mediate deviant behaviours (Zhu et al., 2009). This indicates that while engagement interventions can enhance positive performance outcomes, complementary strategies are necessary to reduce counterproductive actions.

2.9 CONCLUSION OF THE DISCUSSION

In summary, this study demonstrates that employee engagement is a significant determinant of positive performance outcomes, particularly task execution and organisational citizenship behaviours, in the manufacturing sector. The results corroborate prior empirical and theoretical work while highlighting the importance of contextual factors in emerging economies such as South Africa. However, engagement alone appears insufficient to influence counterproductive behaviours, suggesting a need for integrative approaches that combine engagement initiatives with organisational culture management, leadership development, and stress reduction strategies. These insights contribute both to scholarly understanding of engagement–performance dynamics and to practical interventions aimed at enhancing workforce effectiveness in manufacturing settings.

Table 5: Summary in Relation to All Hypotheses

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Support</i>
<i>H₁: There is a relationship between work engagement and work performance (total, task, context)</i>	Supported	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>H₁: Work engagement predicts work performance (total, task, context)</i>	Supported	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<i>H₀: There is no relationship between work engagement and counterproductive work behaviour</i>	Not rejected	✘
<i>H₀: Work engagement does not predict counterproductive behaviour</i>	Not rejected	✘

H₁ (accepted): Work engagement is related to work performance (overall, task, contextual)

2.9.1 Convergence with foundational theory

The accepted hypothesis that engagement is positively related to performance (overall, task, and contextual) is supported by strong empirical evidence. Christian et al.’s (2011) meta-analysis demonstrates that work engagement has a significant positive relationship with both task performance ($M\rho = .39$) and contextual performance ($M\rho = .43$), indicating that employees who are more energetic, dedicated, and absorbed in their work perform better across core job responsibilities and discretionary supportive behaviours. This finding aligns with Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006), who contend that engaged employees exhibit higher levels of motivation and persistence, enabling them to sustain effort and effectiveness. Similarly, Bakker and Demerouti (2008) argue that engagement facilitates proactive and innovative behaviour, which enhances contextual performance. Halbesleben (2010) further notes that engaged employees invest greater personal resources into their work, resulting in increased productivity and work quality. Collectively, these studies affirm that work engagement is a significant predictor of improved employee performance outcomes. Kahn’s (1990) seminal view of engagement as the investment of one’s physical, cognitive, and emotional energies in role performance explains why engaged people deliver more (and better) behaviour at work. When psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability are present, employees bring “their full selves” to their roles, conditions that naturally align with higher-quality performance.

2.9.2 Alignment with classic and recent evidence:

Large-scale meta-analytic evidence shows robust positive links between engagement and unit-level outcomes such as productivity and profitability (Harter et al., 2002a), as well as individual-level task and contextual performance (Christian et al., 2011). The correlations ($r = .60$ for the task; $r = .41$ for the contextual; $r = .49$ for the overall) sit squarely within these established ranges and are directionally identical. Moreover, reviews and meta-analyses consistently confirm engagement’s predictive value

for desirable work outcomes and lower withdrawal (Harter et al., 2013). Classic and contemporary primary studies echo this pattern: engaged employees expend more discretionary effort and persist longer (Saks, 2006; Rich et al., 2010), translating into stronger task execution and citizenship behaviours.

2.9.3 Sector-specific corroboration:

In industrial and African contexts similar to the study site, engagement has been tied to safety compliance and performance (Naidoo & Werner, 2022) and functions as a key mechanism connecting resources to output quality (Ngwenya & Pelsler, 2020; Mukwakungu et al., 2018). South African manufacturing studies also highlight that productivity challenges (skills gaps, repetitive work, safety risk) make engagement particularly consequential for day-to-day performance.

2.9.4 Conclusion for H₁:

Taken together, classic theory (Kahn; JD-R; SET), meta-analytic findings (Harter et al., 2002a; Christian et al., 2011; Halbesleben, 2010), and regional manufacturing evidence converge with the data: in this company, higher engagement is reliably associated with stronger task performance, richer contextual contributions, and better overall performance.

H₂ (accepted): Work engagement predicts work performance (overall, task, contextual)

Why prediction (not just correlation) is theoretically coherent:

JD-R posits a motivational process: resources → engagement → performance. Thus, when engagement rises, employees mobilise energy (vigour), dedication, and absorption into core tasks and extra-role behaviours, yielding measurable performance gains, precisely the structure the regressions capture. The operationalisation of engagement (vigour, dedication, absorption) further clarifies the mechanisms through which engagement translates into behavioural effectiveness (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Fit with prior predictive evidence:

The strongest beta was for task performance ($\beta = .84, p < .01$), which mirrors the literature showing that engaged employees execute core duties with greater intensity and persistence and make fewer errors, effects that are amplified in physically demanding, high-risk environments like manufacturing.

Contextual performance was also significantly predicted ($\beta = .50, p < .01$), consistent with research that engagement fosters helping, initiative, and citizenship behaviours. At the unit level, meta-analytic work likewise links engagement to downstream performance indices (productivity, profitability), reinforcing the predictive interpretation of the results. Because the design is cross-sectional and self-report, causal language should be tempered; standard method variance cannot be entirely ruled out, and longitudinal designs are optimal for establishing directionality. Still, the pattern and size of coefficients align with the dominant theoretical and empirical record.

2.9.5 Conclusion for H₂

Engagement not only co-occurs with but also statistically predicts both task and contextual performance in this manufacturing context, in line with well-established motivational theory and meta-analytic evidence.

H₀ (not rejected): No relationship between engagement and CWB

H₀ (not rejected): Engagement does not predict CWB

The stressor–emotion model of CWB (Spector & Fox, 2005) argues that CWBs are more proximally driven by strain, frustration, and negative affect than by positive motivational states such as engagement. Thus, finding no association between engagement and CWB is theoretically plausible: engagement may boost positive performance, but is not, by itself, a potent antidote to deviance.

Measurement and base-rate considerations: CWB is often underreported on self-report measures due to social desirability, fear of sanctions, and low base rates, particularly in safety-critical manufacturing environments where infractions carry immediate consequences. This can attenuate correlations with engagement. The IWPQ is validated for CWB, but, like any self-report, it is vulnerable to these biases. Multi-source or objective indicators (e.g., disciplinary records, incident

rates) often yield greater variance in deviance analyses.

2.10 RESULTS DISCUSSION

Discussion of results in relation to objectives and hypotheses

2.10.1 Objective 1 / Hypothesis 1: Relationship between Employee Engagement and Performance

The study found that employee engagement was positively related to overall work performance, task performance, and contextual performance, supporting the alternative hypothesis (H₁) for these dimensions. These results are consistent with prior research demonstrating the beneficial effects of engagement on performance outcomes (Al Barwany, 2024; Harter et al., 2002a; Christian et al., 2011; Halbesleben, 2010; Omachi & Ajewumi, 2024). Specifically, the strong link with task performance mirrors findings by Rich et al. (2010), who showed that engaged employees direct sustained attention, energy, and persistence toward core job duties.

Contextual performance, or organisational citizenship behaviours, was also positively associated with engagement, aligning with Social Exchange Theory (SET), which suggests that employees reciprocate perceived support from the organisation with extra-role behaviours (Heyns et al., 2021; Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). This highlights that engagement contributes not only to completing assigned tasks but also to behaviours that promote team and organisational functioning.

Interestingly, engagement did not predict CWB, suggesting that while engagement enhances positive performance outcomes, it alone may not mitigate deviant behaviours. This finding aligns with Zhu et al. (2009), who note that workplace deviance may be more influenced by factors such as stress, leadership style, or organisational culture than by engagement levels.

2.10.2 Objective 2 / Hypothesis 2: Predictive Nature of Employee Engagement

Regression analyses confirmed that engagement significantly predicts task, contextual, and overall performance, demonstrating its predictive role rather than mere correlation. These findings corroborate the JD-R. Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), which posits that job resources enhance

engagement, which in turn drives performance outcomes. The strong predictive effect on task performance may reflect the operational demands of manufacturing roles, in which sustained attention and procedural compliance are critical (Al Barwany, 2024; Omachi & Ajewumi, 2024). Similar patterns have been observed in other manufacturing and high-demand occupational studies (Mukwakungu et al., 2018; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The non-significant prediction of counterproductive behaviours further underscores the need for complementary interventions targeting organisational culture, stress management, and supervisory practices to reduce workplace deviance.

2.11 CONCLUSION

Overall, the study confirms that employee engagement is a key driver of positive performance outcomes in the manufacturing sector, particularly in tasks requiring sustained effort and procedural compliance. The results are consistent with both theoretical frameworks (Kahn, 1990; JD-R model; SET) and prior empirical research (Harter et al., 2002b; Christian et al., 2011; Mukwakungu et al., 2018), reinforcing the importance of fostering engagement as a strategic HR intervention. However, engagement alone may not address counterproductive behaviours, indicating avenues for future research and targeted organisational strategies.

2.11.1 Explanations for Unexpected Findings

The absence of a significant relationship between engagement and CWB is consistent with research showing that CWB is often more strongly predicted by negative factors, such as job stress, strain, and perceptions of injustice, than by positive states like engagement. The stressor–emotion model of CWB (Spector & Fox, 2005) argues that workplace stressors elicit negative emotions, which, in turn, drive deviant behaviours regardless of engagement levels. Similarly, organisational justice theory suggests that when employees perceive unfair treatment, they may engage in retaliatory behaviours, even if they are generally engaged. Personality factors also play a critical role: traits such as low conscientiousness and high neuroticism have been linked to greater CWB, which could override the protective role of engagement.

Moreover, research indicates that highly engaged employees are not immune to strain. Bakker and

Demerouti (2008) note that engaged employees may sometimes overextend themselves, leading to exhaustion that could manifest in counterproductive acts. In tightly regulated environments such as manufacturing, contextual factors such as organisational culture and norms may also shape behaviour. Even with tolerance for minor deviance, engaged employees may still participate in CWBs as a coping strategy (Spector & Fox, 2005). Taken together, these findings suggest that while engagement is a strong predictor of task and contextual performance, counterproductive behaviour is better explained by stress, injustice perceptions, and dispositional variables, aligning with the non-significant relationships observed in this study.

2.11.2 Conclusions and Implications

This study demonstrates that employee engagement positively predicts task, contextual, and overall performance in a South African manufacturing context. Engaged employees are more effective in executing core job responsibilities and in supporting team and organisational functioning. Conversely, engagement did not significantly relate to CWB, suggesting that factors beyond engagement influence deviant behaviours.

2.12 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS:

Human resource professionals and managers are advised to foster engagement through initiatives such as recognition programs, supportive supervision, job enrichment, and opportunities for professional growth. For example, implementing a 'Star of the Month' recognition program can motivate employees by publicly acknowledging their contributions. Providing tailored training sessions that address skill gaps or offer career advancement can further enhance employee commitment and performance. Participative decision-making opportunities, like establishing employee-led committees for workplace improvement, can empower staff by involving them in shaping the work environment. Although engagement enhances positive performance outcomes, additional strategies, such as stress management and equitable workload distribution, may be necessary to address counterproductive behaviours.

2.13 LIMITATIONS:

The study's cross-sectional design limits causal inference, as it captures data at a single point in time

rather than over extended durations. Reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias due to participants' subjective perceptions and the potential for social desirability bias. Furthermore, the single-company sample, focused on a regional manufacturing firm, suggests that findings may not be broadly applicable across different contexts or industries. This limitation underscores the need for caution when generalising results. Future research could address these limitations by employing longitudinal designs, such as time-lagged studies, which allow for the examination of causal relationships over time and reduce temporal bias. Multi-source designs, including diary studies that collect data repeatedly from participants in their natural environments, would provide a richer, more dynamic dataset and minimise self-report bias. Additionally, broadening the sample to include multiple companies or sectors could enhance the generalizability of the findings and provide more comprehensive insights into the engagement-performance dynamics across diverse contexts.

2.14 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

Further studies should examine mediators and moderators of the engagement–performance relationship, explore the antecedents of counterproductive behaviour, and consider qualitative or mixed-methods approaches to capture contextual nuances. Cross-sector and regional comparisons could enhance the applicability of findings across industries and cultural contexts.

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CHAPTER 3 CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 contains the conclusions, limitations, and recommendations.

3.2 CONCLUSIONS

3.2.1 Conclusions based on All Objectives

The general aim of this research was to comprehensively investigate the intricate relationship between employee engagement and employee performance within the manufacturing sector, at a Northwest-based company.

The specific aims relating to the literature review were:

- To conceptualise employee engagement
- To conceptualise employee performance
- Through a literature review, determine the existing relationship between employee engagement and employee performance in general and within the manufacturing sector

The specific aims relating to the empirical study were:

- To determine the strength and direction of the relationship between employee engagement (independent variable) and employee performance (dependent variable) within the manufacturing sector.
- To establish the predictive nature of the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance, providing insights into how changes in engagement levels affect performance outcomes.
- Based on the research findings, formulate practical recommendations for IOP and the manufacturing sector to enhance employee engagement and performance. Additionally, to contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence and insights into the interplay between employee engagement and performance in the manufacturing sector.

3.2.2 Theoretical conclusions

Table 6: Objectives

Objective	Achieved (Yes/No)	How
To conceptualise employee engagement	YES	Chapter 1
To conceptualise employee performance	YES	Chapter 1
To determine the existing relationship between employee engagement and employee performance in general, and within the manufacturing sector.	YES	Chapter 1

The theoretical objectives of this study were to conceptualise employee engagement and employee performance, and to explore the theoretical relationship between these constructs. The literature review presented in Chapters 1 and 2 provided a comprehensive foundation for addressing these objectives and contextualising the study within the South African manufacturing environment, particularly in the Northwest Province.

Employee engagement was theoretically defined as a multidimensional construct involving cognitive, emotional, and physical investment in one’s work (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Key antecedents such as organisational support, leadership style, and psychological safety were identified as vital contributors to engagement, while outcomes included improved productivity, reduced absenteeism, enhanced job satisfaction, and increased commitment (Halbesleben, 2010; Saks, 2006; Salunkhe et al., 2024; Shantz et al., 2016).

Employee performance was conceptualised as a behavioural construct encompassing task performance, contextual performance, and CWB (Al Barwany, 2024; Koopmans, 2013; Omachi & Ajewumi, 2024). Performance was shown to be influenced by factors such as job knowledge, motivation, work environment, and interpersonal relationships (Campbell et al., 1990; Motowidlo, 2003). The importance of behavioural over purely outcome-based assessments was emphasised, particularly in manufacturing environments where external operational variables may influence performance.

The literature strongly supported a positive association between employee engagement and employee performance (Al Barwany, 2024; Omachi & Ajewumi, 2024). Theoretical integration from motivational theories and organisational behaviour frameworks consistently affirmed that engaged employees are more likely to exhibit enhanced task execution, greater organisational citizenship

behaviours, and lower turnover intentions (Christian et al., 2011; Rich et al., 2010; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). In manufacturing contexts, this relationship was significant given the need for accuracy, teamwork, and resilience under physical and operational pressure.

Notably, the literature also revealed several limitations in existing research. Most studies were conducted in Western or service-sector contexts, with limited focus on the manufacturing sector in emerging economies such as South Africa. Furthermore, engagement research in African settings often neglects cultural and socio-economic variables that influence employee behaviour, such as collectivism, historical labour relations, and job insecurity (Heyns et al., 2021; Isimoya, 2013). This confirmed the need for context-specific research, such as the present study, which addresses underexplored local dynamics and adds to the body of knowledge in IOP.

In conclusion, the literature provided a strong theoretical justification for investigating the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance in the manufacturing sector. The theoretical objectives set in Chapter 1 were achieved by establishing that (1) employee engagement is a multidimensional construct influenced by psychological and organisational factors; (2) employee performance includes behavioural and contextual dimensions that are critical in operational sectors like manufacturing; and (3) a clear theoretical link exists between engagement and performance, although further empirical testing was necessary to validate these assumptions in the specific context of the North West province manufacturing company.

3.2.3 Empirical conclusions

Table 7: Empirical conclusions

Objective	Achieved (Yes/No)	How
To determine the strength and direction of the relationship between employee engagement (independent variable) and employee performance (dependent variable) within the manufacturing sector.	Yes	CHAPTER 2 (CORRELATIONS)
To establish the predictive nature of the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance, providing insights into how changes in engagement levels affect performance outcomes.	Yes	CHAPTER 2 (REGRESSION ANALYSIS)
To formulate practical recommendations for IOP and the manufacturing sector to enhance employee engagement and performance. Additionally, to contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence and insights into the interplay between employee engagement and performance in the manufacturing sector.	YES	CHAPTER 3 (CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS)

The empirical objectives of this study were to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance, to establish the predictive value of engagement on performance outcomes, and to contribute context-specific evidence from the South African manufacturing sector, particularly in the Northwest province. The results of the quantitative analysis provided clear empirical support for the theoretical assumptions outlined in the literature.

The findings confirmed a statistically significant and positive relationship between employee engagement and both task performance and contextual performance (Al Barwany, 2024; Omachi & Ajewumi, 2024), thus supporting the core hypothesis that engaged employees are more likely to perform effectively (Christian et al., 2011; Harter et al., 2002b; Saks, 2006; Salunkhe et al., 2024; Shantz et al., 2016). The strong predictive power of engagement on task performance, in particular, reinforces earlier research by Rich et al. (2010), who highlighted that engaged employees exert more

energy, attention, and persistence in their work roles (Al Barwany, 2024; Omachi & Ajewumi, 2024).

The finding that engagement also predicts contextual performance aligns with prior studies suggesting that engaged employees demonstrate increased organisational citizenship behaviours and contribute positively to the work environment (Al Barwany, 2024; Omachi & Ajewumi, 2024; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2002). In a manufacturing environment, where collaboration and adherence to safety protocols are essential, high contextual performance among engaged employees directly impacts operational efficiency and organisational effectiveness (Zondo, 2020).

However, the absence of a statistically significant relationship between employee engagement and CWB presents an important deviation from certain theoretical expectations. While earlier literature suggests that higher engagement should be associated with reduced negative behaviours (Christian et al., 2011; Halbesleben, 2010), the findings of this study indicate that engagement may not be the sole or direct mitigating factor of workplace deviance. This suggests that other variables, such as job stress, burnout, perceived injustice, or toxic workplace culture, may interact with or override engagement in shaping such behaviours, an insight supported by researchers like Bakker and Demerouti (2008) and Shinde (2025).

Ultimately, the empirical objectives of this study were met. The relationship between employee engagement and performance was clearly established, engagement was shown to be a strong predictor of performance dimensions relevant to operational success, and new contextual insights were generated for both scholarly and practical use. These conclusions reinforce the relevance of employee engagement as a strategic driver of performance in the manufacturing sector and confirm the need for ongoing, localised research that accounts for cultural and socio-economic variables shaping workplace behaviour in South Africa.

3.3 LIMITATIONS

While this study successfully achieved its theoretical and empirical objectives, several limitations must be acknowledged regarding the methodological choices and contextual factors that shaped the research process. These limitations do not undermine the findings but rather provide a framework for interpreting the results and identifying opportunities for future research.

Firstly, the use of a cross-sectional survey design presents a significant methodological limitation. Although this design was practical and efficient for gathering data at a single point in time, it restricts the ability to draw causal inferences between variables. While positive correlations and predictive relationships were found between employee engagement and specific dimensions of performance, it remains unclear whether engagement leads to improved performance or whether high-performing employees naturally report higher engagement levels. Longitudinal or experimental designs would be more appropriate to assess causal dynamics over time.

Secondly, sampling limitations should be considered. The study employed stratified random sampling within a single manufacturing company in the Northwest province of South Africa. While this approach enhanced internal validity and representation within the organisation, it limits the generalisability of the findings beyond the sampled company. The sample size ($n = 60$) was relatively modest, further constraining the statistical power and the applicability of the results to broader manufacturing or national contexts. The inclusion of a more diverse and larger sample across multiple companies or regions would increase external validity.

Thirdly, the study relied on self-report questionnaires, the Gallup Q12® and the IWPQ, to measure both the independent and dependent variables. Although both instruments have demonstrated strong psychometric properties and are widely validated (Harter et al., 2002a; Koopmans, 2015), self-report data are inherently vulnerable to standard method variance, social desirability bias, and response fatigue. Participants may have provided socially acceptable answers, particularly regarding performance-related or engagement-related behaviours, which could artificially inflate the strength of the observed relationships.

Another methodological limitation concerns the measurement of CWB. The study found no significant relationship between engagement and CWB, which may partially reflect the limitations of self-reporting such sensitive and socially undesirable behaviours. Employees may underreport behaviours such as withdrawal, noncompliance, or minor sabotage due to fear of judgment or lack of anonymity, even in an anonymous online format. Observational methods or supervisor ratings may provide a more accurate assessment of CWB in future studies.

Additionally, the study's contextual limitations must be acknowledged. The unique socio-economic conditions in the Northwest province, including unemployment rates, historical labour tensions, and

skills shortages, may influence how employee engagement and performance are experienced and expressed. These contextual factors, while critical for understanding the dynamics within this company, may differ significantly from those in other provinces or sectors, thereby affecting the transferability of the findings.

Lastly, practical constraints related to time and access also posed limitations. Data collection had to be completed within a specific period and relied on voluntary online participation, which may have excluded employees who were unavailable or uninterested. This may have introduced participation bias.

In summary, this study's limitations include the cross-sectional design's inability to establish causality, limited generalisability due to a single-organisation sample, potential response biases in self-report measures, challenges in accurately measuring counterproductive behaviours, and practical constraints associated with the research context. These limitations are important considerations for interpreting the findings and serve as a basis for refining future research designs.

3.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.4.1 Recommendations for the organisation or context of the study.

The findings of this study indicate a significant positive correlation between employee engagement and performance, particularly in the domains of task and contextual performance, within a Northwest-based manufacturing company. In light of these empirical findings, a set of strategic recommendations is proposed to enhance employee engagement and subsequently improve overall organizational performance.

First and foremost, recognizing the substantial predictive power of employee engagement on performance metrics, it is imperative for the organization to prioritize initiatives that actively promote engagement. Recommended strategies include the regular acknowledgment of employee contributions, the establishment of transparent communication channels between leadership and staff, and the clear articulation of performance expectations. Given the Gallup Q12® results, which reflect a generally high level of engagement, there exists a pivotal opportunity to sustain and deepen this engagement through strategic reinforcement.

Leadership style emerges as a critical moderator of employee engagement (Breevaart et al., 2014). Therefore, organizations should invest in robust leadership development programs aimed at equipping managers with the skills necessary to foster psychological safety, provide constructive feedback, and facilitate employee growth. Transformational leadership practices have been demonstrated to be particularly effective in cultivating environments where employees feel valued, motivated, and aligned with organizational objectives (Zhu et al., 2013).

Furthermore, employees exhibit a higher likelihood of engagement when they perceive opportunities for personal and professional development (Saks, 2006; Salunkhe et al., 2024; Shantz et al., 2016). The organization should therefore expand access to training programs, upskilling initiatives, and career development pathways. In the manufacturing context, this could encompass cross-functional training, mentorship programs, or technical skills enhancement that empower employees to contribute meaningfully and foster their own career growth within the company.

To further cultivate a culture of engagement, the organization must promote employee voice by involving staff in decision-making processes, particularly those that impact their roles and work environment (Ashley & Brijball Parumasur, 2024). Implementing mechanisms such as suggestion schemes, employee feedback forums, and participative goal-setting can enhance motivation and ownership among employees while ensuring alignment with operational objectives (Govender & Bussin, 2020).

Although engagement did not predict counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) in this study, it remains essential to monitor factors that could potentially lead to disengagement. These factors may include unclear role definitions, inadequate management, insufficient resources, or perceived inequities (Ashley & Brijball Parumasur, 2024; Knox and Marin-Cadavid, 2023; Lidman et al., 2023). Periodic engagement surveys and performance audits are recommended as tools to identify and address systemic issues preemptively, thus preventing detrimental effects on morale and productivity.

Engagement flourishes in environments characterized by respect, collaboration, and a shared sense of purpose. Therefore, it is crucial for the organization to deliberately cultivate a positive workplace culture that reinforces its core values, celebrates successes, and addresses conflicts or misconduct in a constructive manner (Ashley & Brijball Parumasur, 2024; Govender & Bussin, 2020). This cultural foundation is particularly vital in manufacturing environments, where teamwork and cooperation

directly impact productivity and safety. For instance, the company's practice of holding monthly feedback sessions can serve as an effective platform for enhancing communication and cohesion.

To ensure the long-term efficacy of engagement initiatives, these efforts should be integrated into the organization's performance management systems. Managers ought to be encouraged to routinely assess engagement levels and correlate them with productivity, absenteeism, and quality indicators. By aligning employee engagement with key performance drivers, the organization can facilitate continuous improvement and maintain accountability (Al Barwany, 2024; Omachi & Ajewumi, 2024).

In summary, this study provides evidence-based guidance for the organization to strategically enhance employee engagement, thereby leveraging it as a mechanism for improving task execution, fostering collaboration, and enhancing overall workforce effectiveness. Given the competitive and operational challenges facing South African manufacturing firms, investing in employee engagement not only represents a people-centered approach but also catalyzes enhanced organizational performance.

3.4.2 Recommendations for future research

This study offers valuable insights into the relationship between employee engagement and performance within a manufacturing company located in the Northwest region of South Africa. Nevertheless, several avenues for further research remain open, which could enhance the understanding of this relationship across different contexts and populations.

One of the primary limitations of this investigation lies in its cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to establish causal inferences. Future research endeavors are encouraged to employ longitudinal or experimental methodologies. Such approaches would facilitate an examination of how employee engagement and performance may evolve, thereby clarifying whether increased engagement results in enhanced performance or if high-performing employees naturally exhibit greater engagement.

Additionally, the scope of this study was limited to a single manufacturing entity in the Northwest province of South Africa. Future research must expand this examination to encompass multiple

organizations across various provinces and industries. Comparative analyses between sectors, such as manufacturing and services, as well as distinctions between urban and rural organizations, could provide critical insights into the contextual factors that influence the dynamics of engagement and performance.

Although a direct link between engagement and performance was established in this study, future investigations should delve into the potential mediating and moderating variables that may affect the strength and direction of this relationship. Relevant factors to consider include psychological capital, leadership styles, organizational justice, work-life balance, and job insecurity. Exploring these dimensions could contribute to the development of more nuanced and context-sensitive models of employee engagement.

Given South Africa's distinctive socio-political history and its diverse workforce, it is essential to consider cultural norms, such as collectivism, Ubuntu, and power distance, which may significantly influence employee engagement and performance. Future research should integrate these cultural dimensions to gain a deeper understanding of how engagement manifests in African organizational contexts.

Moreover, this study relied on self-report measures, which, while pragmatic, may be subject to biases. Future research should incorporate multi-source data, such as supervisor evaluations, peer assessments, and objective performance metrics, as well as mixed-method approaches that merge quantitative findings with qualitative insights. Employing interviews or focus groups, for instance, could enrich the understanding of employee perceptions and lived experiences.

Research is also needed to assess the impact of specific engagement-enhancing interventions, such as recognition programs, team-building initiatives, or leadership development efforts. Future studies could adopt intervention designs or action research methodologies to identify which strategies are most effective in fostering engagement and improving performance within particular organizational contexts.

Lastly, while this study did not identify a significant relationship between employee engagement and counterproductive work behavior (CWB), future research should further explore this relationship using alternative data collection techniques or investigate other antecedents of CWB, such as job

stress, burnout, or perceived injustice. A more in-depth exploration of these behaviors could yield practical insights for mitigating workplace deviance.

In conclusion, future research should aim to build upon the findings of the present study by addressing its methodological limitations, broadening its scope of inquiry, and integrating new theoretical and contextual variables. Such efforts will significantly contribute to a richer and more applicable body of knowledge regarding employee engagement and its critical role in enhancing organizational performance within South Africa and beyond.

3.5 INTEGRATION OF THE STUDY

This study investigated the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance within a manufacturing company in South Africa's Northwest province. By combining a rigorous review of relevant literature with a quantitative, cross-sectional research design, the study achieved both theoretical clarification and empirical verification. The findings confirm that employee engagement significantly influences task and contextual performance, highlighting the strategic importance of cultivating a motivated and committed workforce in operationally intensive environments.

The study makes a distinct contribution to African Industrial and Organisational Psychology scholarship by addressing a critical empirical gap: engagement-performance dynamics in manufacturing contexts remain under-researched on the continent. By situating the research within a South African manufacturing environment, this study extends the predominantly Western-centric engagement literature and offers contextually grounded evidence relevant to African organisational settings. It demonstrates that engagement is not a universal construct but one that interacts with local organisational, cultural, and operational realities, thereby enriching theory and offering nuanced insights for IOP practice in Africa.

Empirically, the study provides actionable insights for manufacturing organisations seeking to improve performance outcomes. It highlights how engagement can be leveraged to enhance productivity, collaboration, and safety compliance, reinforcing the notion that engagement is both measurable and strategically manageable. The recommendations derived from this study offer a

roadmap for organisations to implement evidence-based strategies that align employee motivation with operational and organisational goals.

While the study acknowledges limitations related to its cross-sectional design and single-context focus, it establishes a foundation for longitudinal and multi-site investigations into engagement and performance in African manufacturing. Future research can build on these findings to explore causality, sectoral variations, and the interaction between engagement and emerging organisational challenges, such as technological adoption, skills gaps, and workforce diversity.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that employee engagement is a significant determinant of task and contextual performance in manufacturing environments. It contributes uniquely to African Industrial and Organisational Psychology scholarship by providing contextually grounded, empirical evidence in a sector and region that remains under-researched. The findings offer both theoretical enrichment, highlighting how engagement interacts with local organisational and operational realities, and practical guidance for organisations seeking to strategically manage engagement to enhance productivity, collaboration, and workforce effectiveness.

3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 3 presented the study's conclusions, limitations, and recommendations. Theoretical and empirical findings confirmed that employee engagement significantly influences task and contextual performance, but not counterproductive behaviour. Limitations related to research design, sample, and measurement were acknowledged. Practical recommendations for enhancing engagement in manufacturing environments were provided, alongside proposals for future research. The chapter concluded by integrating the study's contributions within a broader academic and practical context.

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APPENDIX A – ETHICAL CLEARANCE



College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Industrial and Organisational Psychology

Date: 15/08/2024

Dear Mrs CHRISTELEAN THEOLEAN MECUUR

Decision: Ethics Approval from 15 August 2024 to 15 August 2027

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)
Ref #: 3279
Name: Mrs CHRISTELEAN THEOLEAN MECUUR
Student #: 53910877
Staff #:

Researcher: Mrs CHRISTELEAN THEOLEAN MECUUR

24 Totius Park, Potchefstroom

POTCHEFSTROOM

53910877@mylife.unisa.ac.za 0632024097

Supervisor: Professor Mokgata Matjle mokgata.matjle@ul.ac.za

Co-Supervisor:

Co-Researcher(s):

Email address:

Relationship between employee engagement and employee performance at a Northwest-based manufacturing company

Qualification: MCom Industrial and Organisational Psychology

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Industrial and Organisational Psychology for the research as mentioned above study. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The **low risk application** was reviewed by the College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Industrial and Organisational Psychology on 30 July 2024 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the following provisions:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles of the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in undertaking the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Industrial and Organisational Psychology.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made concerning the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's Act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future if the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date (15 August 2027). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute a renewal application for Ethics Research Committee approval.

Additional Conditions

1. Disclosure of data to third parties is prohibited without explicit consent from Unisa.
2. De-identified data must be safely stored on password-protected PCs.
3. Care should be taken by the researcher when publishing the results to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the university.
4. Adherence to the National Statement on Ethical Research and Publication practices, principle seven referring to Social awareness, must be ensured: "Researchers and institutions must be sensitive to the potential impact of their research on society, marginal groups or individuals, and must consider these when weighing the benefits of the research against any harmful effects, with a view to minimising or avoiding the latter where possible." Unisa will not be liable for any failure to comply with this principle.

Note

Reference number 3279 should be indicated in all forms of communication with the intended research participants and the Committee.

Kind regards,



Dr Elzabe Nel
Acting Chair of College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Industrial and Organisational Psychology
E-mail: coetzec1@unisa.ac.za



Prof MC Mulaudzi
Executive Dean / By delegation from the Executive Dean of the College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Industrial and Organisational Psychology
E-mail: tshilmc@unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX B – PERMISSION LETTER



M-Tech Industrial (Pty) Ltd.
PO Box 19855, Noordbrug, 2522, South Africa
Totius Park, 24 Totius Street, Potchefstroom, 2531
Tel: +27 18 297 0326, Fax: +27 18 297 0318
Reg No: 2000/020944/07
www.mtechindustrial.com

Subject: Permission Granted for Research Study at M-Tech Industrial

Dear Christelean Theolean Mecuur,

I hope this letter finds you well.

I am pleased to inform you that your request to conduct a research study at M-Tech Industrial has been granted. We acknowledge the importance of your study, which aims to investigate the empirical relationship between employee engagement and performance, as well as potential differences among various demographic groups.

Please feel free to proceed with your research activities within our premises. We trust that you will conduct the study with professionalism and integrity, adhering to all relevant guidelines and regulations. Additionally, we request that you keep us informed of any developments or findings throughout the research process.

We appreciate your interest in M-Tech Industrial and your commitment to advancing knowledge in this area. Should you require any assistance or support during your research, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for choosing M-Tech Industrial as the setting for your study. We look forward to the insights and contributions that your research will bring.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Willie Landman', is written over a thin horizontal line.

14/05/2024
Willie Landman
CEO
M-Tech Industrial

Directors: Dr. PG Rousseau (Pr.Eng, PhD), Mr. WA Landman (MBA, M.Eng).
Ms. JM Manyapelo (CA(SA)), Mr. MJ Mokoala (CA(SA)).

APPENDIX C – PERMISSION REQUEST

Date: May 2024

To:

Willie Landman
Chief Executive Officer
M-Tech Industrial (Pty) Ltd
PO Box 19855
Noordbrug
2522

Subject: *Request for Permission to Conduct Research Study at M-Tech Industrial*

Dear Mr. Landman,

I hope this letter finds you well.

My name is **Christelean Theolean Mecuur**, and I am currently completing my Master's degree in Industrial and Organisational Psychology. As part of my academic requirements, I am conducting a research study titled "**The Relationship Between Employee Engagement and Employee Performance at a Northwest Province-Based Manufacturing Company.**"

I hereby request permission to conduct this research study at **M-Tech Industrial (Pty) Ltd**. The study aims to investigate the empirical relationship between employee engagement and employee performance, as well as to explore potential differences across various demographic groups within the organisation.

The research will involve the distribution of an anonymous questionnaire to willing employees. No personal identifying information will be collected, and all results will be treated with strict confidentiality. Participation will be entirely voluntary, and all ethical research standards set by the University of South Africa (UNISA) will be adhered to.

Should permission be granted, I will ensure that the research process does not disrupt normal organisational operations. I will also gladly share the final research results with the company upon completion.

Thank you for considering my request. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to conduct this study at M-Tech Industrial, and I am available to provide any additional information if required.

Warm regards,



Christelean Theolean Mecuur

Master's Candidate: Industrial & Organisational Psychology
University of South Africa (UNISA)

APPENDIX D – EDITING CERTIFICATE

Declaration of Professional Editing

18 November 2025



This letter serves to confirm that Christelean Theolean Mecuur submitted a dissertation to me for editing. The dissertation is entitled, '**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AT A NORTHWEST-BASED MANUFACTURING COMPANY**'.

The following aspects were edited:

- Spelling
- Grammar
- Consistency of layout
- Sentence structure
- Logical sequencing
- **References** (Reference checking involves proofreading and some editing with regards to the simple formatting of the references into the referencing style required i.e. changing the order of the elements - author, date, title, series, place, publisher, journal, volume, issue, pagination etc.)
- All Appendices

My involvement is restricted to language use and spelling, completeness and consistency, referencing style, and formatting of headings, captions and tables of contents. I did no structural re-writing of the content and did not influence the academic content in any way. While comments and corrections are suggested by the editor the accuracy of content and formatting in the final document remains the responsibility of the author.

Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Kim Smit

● **Tel: +27 (0)78 493 6554** ● **Email: editorialkns@peakedhorizons.co.za**
Member of the Freelance panel for the University of South Africa
Associate Member of the Professional Editor's Guild

APPENDIX E – CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

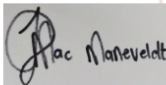
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the quantitative questionnaire.

I have received a copy of the informed consent agreement.

Researcher's Name & Surname Theolean Mecuur



Digitally signed by Theolean Mac Maneveldt
DN: cn=Theolean Mac Maneveldt,
o=M-Tech Industrial, ou=HR,
email=Theolean@mtchindustrial.com, c=US
Date: 2024.10.08 10:18:10 +02'00'

Researcher's signature.....Date 08 October 2024

APPENDIX F - QUESTIONNAIRES

Relationship between Employee Engagement and Employee Performance in Manufacturing.

The survey, conducted by Christelean Theolean Mac Maneveldt under the supervision of Dr. Matjie, aims to study the relationship between employee engagement and performance in a Northwest-based manufacturing company. Participants, aged between 20-65, who are currently employed are invited to contribute anonymously.

The survey will take 5 to 10 minutes, and responses will remain confidential. The research findings will help improve workplace practices in the manufacturing sector and advance academic knowledge. Data will be securely stored for five years and destroyed thereafter. Ethical approval was granted by the University of South Africa's Ethics Review Committee.

The research was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology. The primary researcher, Christelean Theolean Mac Maneveldt, can be contacted during office hours at 063 202 4097. The study leader, Dr Mokgata A Matjie (Tshepo), can be contacted at mokgata.matjie@ul.ac.za during office hours at 015 268 3609.

Should you have any questions regarding the ethical aspects of the study, you can contact the chairperson of the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, Dr EC NEL (coetzec1@unisa.ac.za). Alternatively, you can report any serious unethical behaviour at the University's Toll-Free Hotline 0800 86 96 93.

required

1

I confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.
I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the quantitative questionnaire.

Attached is a copy of the informed consent agreement. *

I agree

I do not agree

2

Gender *

Male

Female

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the quantitative questionnaire.

I have received a copy of the informed consent agreement.

Researcher's Name & Signature: Christelean Theolean Mac Maneveldt

Researcher's Signature:  Date: 08 October 2024

3

Age group *

- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-65
- 65+

4

Role type *

- Management
- Administration
- Sales
- Technical

5

How satisfied are you with your company as a place to work? *

- Extremely dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Extremely satisfied

6

I know what is expected of me at work *

- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- somewhat agree
- agree
- Strongly agree
- Does not know / Does not apply

7

I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right. *

- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- somewhat agree
- agree
- Strongly agree
- Does not know / Does not apply

8

At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day. *

- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- somewhat agree
- agree
- Strongly agree
- Does not know / Does not apply

9

In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work *

- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- somewhat agree
- agree
- Strongly agree
- Does not know / Does not apply

10

My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person *

- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- somewhat agree
- agree
- Strongly agree
- Does not know / Does not apply

11

There is someone at work who encourages my development *

- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- somewhat agree
- agree
- Strongly agree
- Does not know / Does not apply

12

At work, my opinions seem to count *

- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- somewhat agree
- agree
- Strongly agree
- Does not know / Does not apply

13

The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important *

- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- somewhat agree
- agree
- Strongly agree
- Does not know / Does not apply

14

My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work *

- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- somewhat agree
- agree
- Strongly agree
- Does not know / Does not apply

15

I have a best friend at work *

- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- somewhat agree
- agree
- Strongly agree
- Does not know / Does not apply

16

In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress *

- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- somewhat agree
- agree
- Strongly agree
- Does not know / Does not apply

17

This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow *

- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- somewhat agree
- agree
- Strongly agree
- Does not know / Does not apply

18

In the past 3 months... I managed to plan my work so that it was done on time. *

- seldom
- sometimes
- frequently
- often
- always

19

In the past 3 months... I kept in mind the work result I needed to achieve.
*

- seldom
- sometimes
- frequently
- often
- always

20

In the past 3 months... I was able to set priorities. *

- seldom
- sometimes
- frequently
- often
- always

21

In the past 3 months... I was able to carry out my work efficiently. *

- seldom
- sometimes
- frequently
- often
- always

22

In the past 3 months... I managed my time well. *

- seldom
- sometimes
- frequently
- often
- always

23

In the past 3 months... On my own initiative, I started new tasks when my old tasks were completed. *

- seldom
- sometimes
- frequently
- often
- always

24

In the past 3 months... I took on challenging tasks when they were available. *

- seldom
- sometimes
- frequently
- often
- always

25

In the past 3 months... I worked on keeping my job knowledge up-to-date. *

- seldom
- sometimes
- frequently
- often
- always

26

In the past 3 months... I worked at keeping my job skills up-to-date. *

- seldom
- sometimes
- frequently
- often
- always

27

In the past 3 months... I came up with creative solutions to new problems. *

- seldom
- sometimes
- frequently
- often
- always

28

In the past 3 months... I took on extra responsibilities *

- seldom
- sometimes
- frequently
- often
- always

29

In the past 3 months... I kept looking for new challenges in my job. *

- seldom
- sometimes
- frequently
- often
- always

30

In the past 3 months... I actively participated in work meetings and/or consultations *

- seldom
- sometimes
- frequently
- often
- always

31

In the past 3 months... I complained about minor work related issues at work. *

- Never
- Seldom
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- often

32

In the past 3 months... I made problems at work bigger than they were. *

- Never
- Seldom
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- often

33

In the past 3 months... I focused on the negative aspects of a work situation, instead of on the positive aspects. *

- Never
- Seldom
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- often

34

In the past 3 months... I spoke with colleagues about the negative aspects of my work. *

- Never
- Seldom
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- often

35

In the past 3 months... I spoke with people from outside the organization about the negative aspects of my work. *

- Never
- Seldom
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- often

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 Microsoft Forms

APPENDIX G – TURNITIN REPORT

Similarity Report

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CHARACTER COUNT: **156500 Characters**

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